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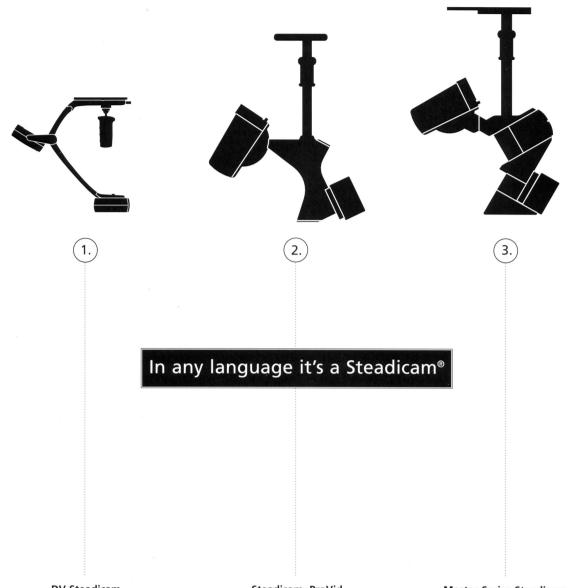
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On Our Cover:

Troubled couple Vinny (John Leguizamo) and

Dionna (Mira Sorvino) steam up the dance floor

in the Summer of Sam, a New York-based drama

directed by Spike Lee

and photographed by Ellen Kuras, ASC (photo

by David Lee, courtesy of Touchstone Pictures).

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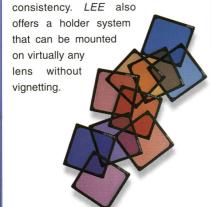
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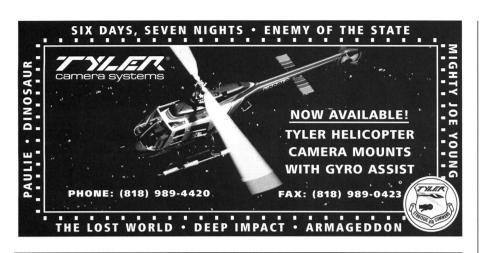
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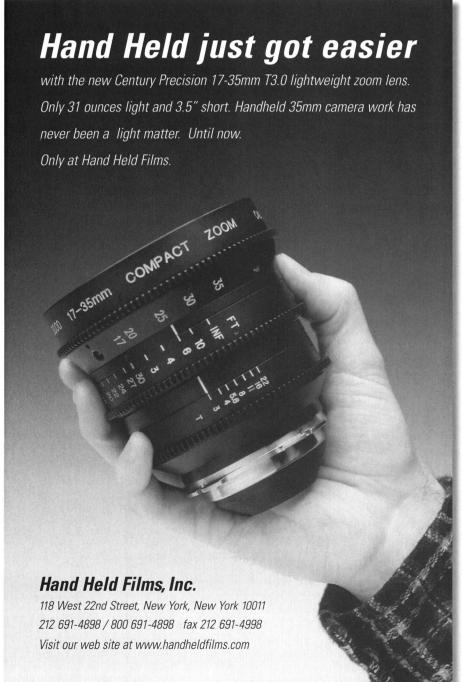
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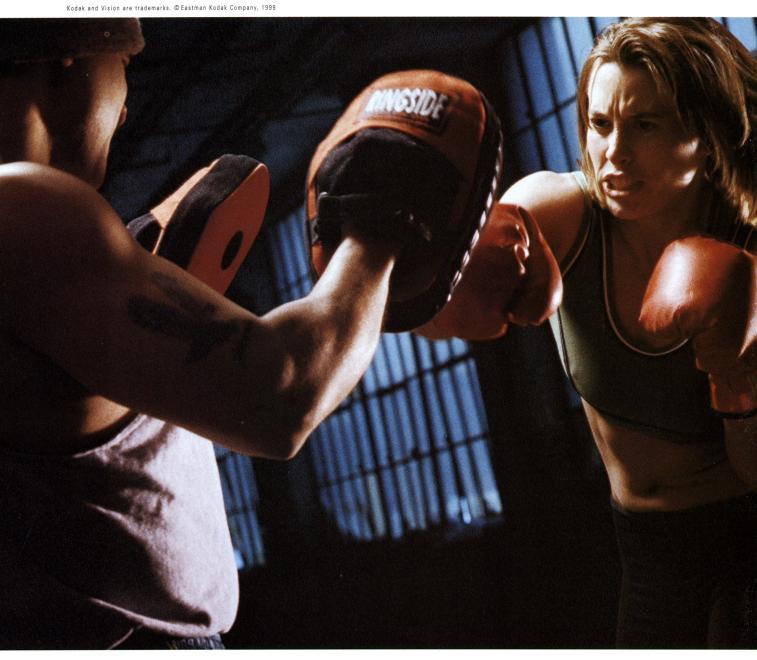


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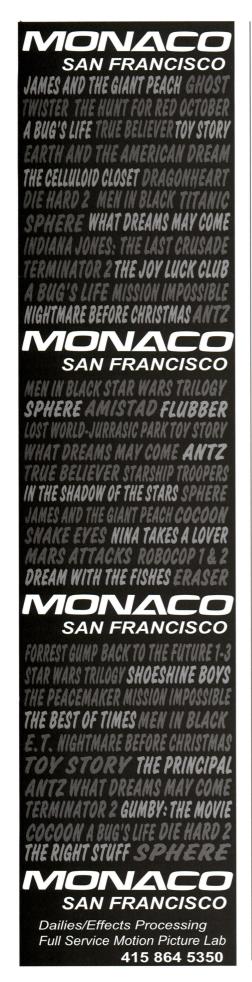
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Alan Haehnle





Editor's Note



anhattan's reputation as a volatile metropolis has made it a memorable setting for edgy films about characters with troubled minds. The city's onscreen image as an island of lost souls began in earnest in 1969, when *Midnight Cowboy* shocked viewers with its frank, unflinching vision of two men set adrift in the Apple's seedy underbelly. During the following decade, other films took turns exploring the town's effects on its less stable inhabitants. *Klute* (1971) focused on a call girl stalked by an obsessive admirer; *Taxi Driver* (1975) probed the mind of an unbalanced cab driver; *Dog Day Afternoon* (1975)

traced the media rise and eventual downfall of two bumbling, neurotic bank robbers; *Looking for Mr. Goodbar* (1977) documented the downward spiral of a schoolteacher addicted to drinking, drugs and dangerous sex; and *Cruising* (1980) capped the decade with the seamy tale of a cop who becomes enmeshed in the gay leather underground.

Today, with Times Square made over in Disney's image and no-nonsense mayor Rudolph Giuliani cracking down on crime, panhandlers and rude cab drivers, the Naked City is a somewhat kinder, gentler place. With *Summer of Sam*, however, director Spike Lee travels back in time to 1977, when the boroughs of New York were beset by a psychotic serial killer, media-fueled paranoia, the onslaught of punk music and a major power outage. Our coverage of Mr. Lee's latest, which features inventive photography by Ellen Kuras, ASC, begins on page 38.

The Thomas Crown Affair (page 54) offers a different kind of retro spirit, transplanting the hip Sixties crime caper of the same title (shot by Haskell Wexler, ASC) to the Nineties. Directed by John McTiernan and shot by Tom Priestly Jr., this stylish remake stars Pierce Brosnan and Rene Russo in the roles originally played by the nattily attired Steve McQueen and Faye Dunaway.

Fans of the hit TV show *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (page 90) also have something to sink their teeth into this month. Cinematographer Michael Gershman reveals his approach to the horror/comedy series, in which intrepid teens battle both big problems (evil hordes of the undead) and lesser annoyances (unnerving outbreaks of acne).

This month's other special features include profiles of this year's Academy and ASC Award-nominated cinematographers ("Award-Worthy Images," page 70); a complete rundown of this year's Academy Scientific and Technical Awards ("A Cut Above," page 118); Part II of our in-depth examination of telecine tools and techniques ("From Film to Tape," page 102); and historian Rudy Behlmer's enlightening account of the days when movie studios spiced up some of their new releases with footage borrowed from previous films ("Deja View," page 128). Hopefully, Mr. Behlmer's article won't unduly influence any of you studio executives out there.

Sincerely,
Stephen Pizzello
Executive Editor

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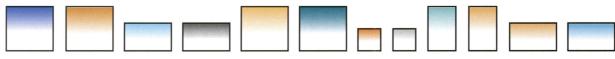
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Letters

Kind Words

It is one of the pleasant consequences of the boom times in Hollywood that we are all normally so busy that we can't take the time to compliment individuals like you, who are making important contributions to the revolution in our industry.

The recent editorial and design innovations at *American Cinematogra-pher* have revitalized a publication that plays an essential role in the lives of the thousands who work in film and television, and the current issue [April '98] is an outstanding example of your achievement.

Andrew Thompson's Production Slate [featuring pieces penned by Mark Dillon and Debra Kaufman] is full of insights, as are the expertly presented reports on *The Matrix* by Christopher Probst and Ron Magid. In addition, all of the other departments in the magazine are first-rate

On behalf of the hundreds who appreciate your work and don't have the time to write, please accept my heartfelt thanks!

— Barry Clark Co-Chairman Mandalay Media Arts

Then Again, Nobody's Perfect

Some eagle-eyed readers noticed a few errors in our March 80th anniversary issue (no doubt caused by the staff's lack of restful slumber). On our list of Best Shot Films (1950-1997), we credited Sven Nykvist, ASC as the cinematographer on Ingmar Bergman's *The Seventh Seal*, which was actually photographed by Gunnar Fischer. *AC* thanks Adam Fleischman for catching this rather egregious oversight. Also, due to a typographical error, we misspelled director of photography Geoffrey Unsworth, BSC's name in the subhead on page 133.

In the following letter, another reader offers a historical correction.

The Bell Tolls for AC's Editors

Author David Samuelson, in his fine article "Strokes of Genius" in your excellent 80th Anniversary special issue, makes a serious factual error when he states that Lee deForest worked for Bell Laboratories. Nothing could be further from the truth. Mr. deForest (note the spelling-it is always a small "d") developed his "deForest Phonofilm" system as an independent company. For a period of time he partnered with Theodore Case, who had been working on a similar system, but Case soon left and went on to perfect the sound-on-film system that became Fox Movietone. A competing sound-on-film system, RCA Photophone, was created out of the Pallophotophone invented early in the 1920s by Charles A. Hoxie of General Electric.

Western Electric (which *later* founded Bell Labs) developed the Vitaphone sound-on-disc system with a team that included Stanley Watkins and Arthur C. Keller. Keller went on to experiment with stereophonic disc recording as early as 1927. The Vitaphone system continued to exist side-by-side with sound-onfilm for a number of years past the 1928 point cited by Samuelson. The Vitaphone films now being restored utilizing the original discs show that this system was initially capable of much higher sound quality than the competing sound-on-film systems.

Micheal Biel, Ph.D
 Professor, Radio-TV
 Morehead State University
 Morehead, Kentucky

A Plea for Safe Stunts

I have been a stunt coordinator in the motion picture business for about 25 years — as well as the national chairman of the Screen Actors Guild stunt and safety committee for the last five years, and the Screen Actors Guild representative to the labor management safety committee for the last six years. This

IN MEMORY

OF

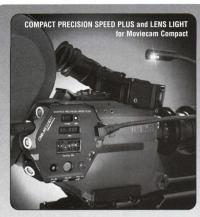
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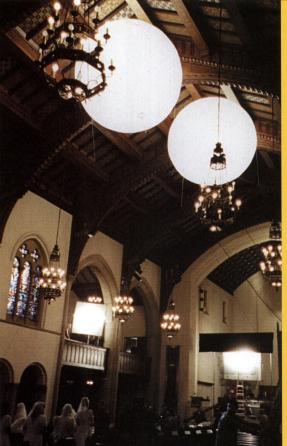


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latter committee is responsible for formulating and publishing the industrywide safety bulletins for the motion picture industry.

My interest was raised while reading the recent article about The Matrix ["Welcome to the Machine"] in the April '98 issue of American Cinematographer. Specifically, I found the caption text on page 35 to be very troubling.

As I am sure you realize, your magazine is read by many filmmakers who are seeking to emulate the successful people in the business. When you print an article claiming that directors and stunt coordinators were insisting that actors punch each other in the face for the sake of realism, I think you are doing a great injustice to professional filmmakers

All of us who work as stunt coordinators are now going to have directors demanding to have actors punching each other so they can be just like the Wachowski brothers. Hong Kong stuntmen are famous for the deaths and injuries on their films. Jackie Chan goes so far as to show all of the wrecks and injuries over the end credits of his films. offering them up as comedy!

It doesn't take any talent to film reality. As long as it is in frame, exposed properly and in focus, you pretty much have the event captured. Creating illusions, however, takes talent and experience, and that is what stunt work and filmmaking is all about. What comes next? Bulletproof vests and live ammunition for the gun fights?

> - Rick Barker Canyon Country, California

While AC strives to report as accurately as possible on various production methods, we'd like to state for the record that we do not encourage unsafe practices on the set. We're certain that the methods used by the Wachowski brothers were supervised by experienced stunt coordinators, and were in no way dangerous to the film's actors or stunt professionals.



Global Village

A Supernatural Summer Down Under

by David E. Williams



A gunman gets the drop on Pando (Bryan Brown), a drug-dealing criminal, in Two Hands. Inspired by his love of absurd comedies and gangster movies, as well as an unhealthy fascination with the New South Wales crime scene, Australian writer/director Gregor Jordan penned a script entitled *Two Hands*. "I had the idea of making the lead character a strip-club spruiker [or barker], and that set the rest of the story in motion," the filmmaker recalls. "It evolved into a black-comedy gangster film with a supernatural subplot."

Jordan studied at the North Sydney Technical College and then worked in the film and television industry in various capacities. His directorial career began with music videos, and his first short film, *Swinger*, earned the Jury Prize at the 1995 Cannes Film Festival. His second short, *Stitched*, was nominated for an Australian Film Institute Award (Best Screenplay for a nonfeature film).

In Two Hands, which recently screened at the Sundance Film Festival and Cannes, a former street kid named Jimmy (Heath Ledger) gets his big break into the underworld when a drug-dealer named Pando (Bryan Brown) asks him to deliver \$10,000 to another crime figure. Unfortunately, Pando's cash is stolen, forcing Jimmy to seek help from his dead brother's wife (Susie Porter), who arranges for him to take part in a bank robbery to replace the money.

While the film is imbued with a sort of "magic realism," the supernatural element is represented by a mysterious character called "The Man" (Steven Vidler), who narrates the film. We later learn that he is Jimmy's dead older brother, who has escaped from Hell to save his sibling from similar damnation. Jordan explains that the undead character was inspired by such schlocky horror movies as *Return of the Living Dead*

(which also combined black comedy with horror), and the chorus in *Henry V*.

Two Hands was shot by Malcolm McCulloch, an Australian cameraman who came to filmmaking via a career in photography. Since the early 1980s, he has shot numerous television commercials and won many awards. McCulloch's feature film credits include Frenchman's Farm, Belinda (which earned an ACS Merit Award), and the stylish crime film Kiss or Kill (which garnered a nomination for Best Cinematography at the 1997 AFI Awards — see Montreal Film Festival coverage in AC Nov. '97).

Notes Jordan, "I was impressed by Malcolm's documentary-style work in Kiss or Kill, as well as his commercial reel, which demonstrated how he could create many different photographic looks," Jordan says "I knew that he would work with me to create the look I was after, as opposed to impressing one particular style on the film."

While reading the *Two Hands* script, McCulloch found it to be both "bizarre and wonderful — I knew I wanted to shoot it, and it turned out to be a lot of fun." Jordan's preparation for the production impressed the cameraman as well. "He's a good communicator and knew how he wanted to shoot it."

The 42 days of principal production began in April of 1998 in Sydney, which Jordan describes as "a bright and colorful place that also happens to be the organized-crime capital of Australia." Locations ranged from the seedy Kings Cross red-light area to Bondi Beach. Comparing Sydney to Miami, Jordan explains, "The predominant colors here are blue and green — the sky, sea and hills. And because the film is set in the summer, everyone is walking around in shorts and covered in sweat. This adds a strange absurdity to the dramatic crime elements in the story." He further explains that he sought to exploit this contrast by replicating the colorful, "sunny" tonality of Barry Sonnenfeld's photography in Raising Arizona, while adding the kind of rich textures that Michael Ballhaus, ASC lent to GoodFellas. Prep meetings with McCulloch and production designer Steven Jones-Evans





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included screenings of these films and *Mystery Train* (shot by Robby Müller, BVK, NSC), as well as some extensive study time with still photos.

"Two Hands has elements of many genres, but it's very much a comedy, so I had to be careful with the lighting," McCulloch reasons. "It's moody, but we wanted to be able to read all of the performers' expressions and actions. The overall look is urban contemporary and not specific to Sydney, but the setting is on the seedy side. A lot of locations were alleyways, and there are a lot of night exteriors, so that partially dictated the look." The art direction added a lot of grays, browns and reds to this milieu — the hero's car, for example, is the color of dried blood.

"In terms of camera movement," McCulloch adds, "we used a lot of subtle moves punctuated by sudden, rapid tracking moves pushing into closeups, like in *Raising Arizona*." Steadicam operators Harry Panagiotidis and Phil Balsden aided the cameraman, who operated on much of the picture himself.

April was also the beginning of the continent's fall season, which proved to be one of the wettest in 50 years. "The situation became very stressful," Jordan remembers. "Because of the weather, nearly every day we had a situation where we had to constantly reschedule what we were going to shoot, and heavily light a lot of our day exteriors."

Jordan credits McCulloch with creating the film's convincing summertime look despite the adverse elements, noting, "He's very clever with his lighting, and when you see the film, it's hard to believe that between scenes the actors were covered with coats and hot water bottles!"

The cinematographer used the inclement situation to his advantage, though, incorporating the rain into the film's overall style. "We were trying to create a heat wave in the middle of a tropical downpour," McCulloch details, "so the look became very 'moist.' Although we had a lot of dark areas in the frame, we used very bright backlight to make the highlights burn out. For

instance, if we were in an alley, we'd have a bright backlight coming in, shining off moist walls and the performers' sweaty skin. I'd then use very low-key lighting on the actors, so the scene would be very hot while dark at the same time. We used a lot of reflections and overexposed highlights."

The cameraman did not measure his degree of overexposure, offering with a laugh, "The minute I bring out the meter and start working in ratios, I feel like I've become a bit wimpy." He does add that Kodak's Vision 5274 200T and 5279 500T stocks held detail in his overexposed areas, although "I would never want to be more than a stop over anything I wanted dead-on."

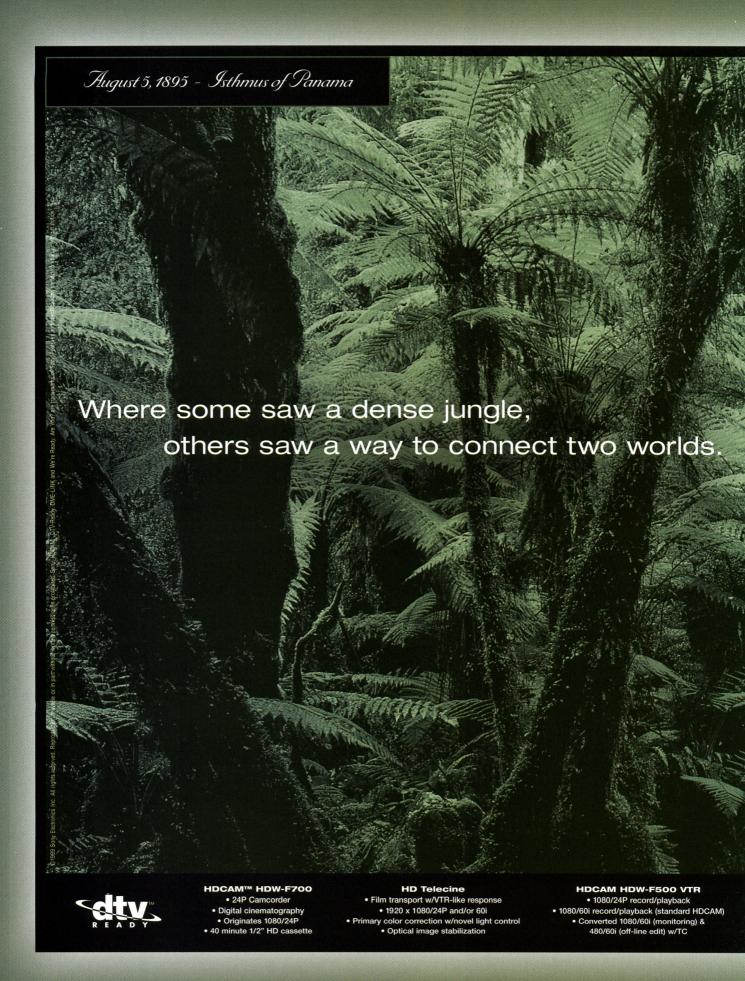
To accomplish his lighting scheme, McCulloch primarily employed instruments from two ends of the power spectrum: 18Ks for backlight and 4-bank Kino Flos set very close to the actors for modeling. The cameraman relates, "Much of the lighting is very warm — about 900°K, which is quite yellow. The night photography is warm as well, about 3200°K and slightly green.

"To overcome the weather during some of the exterior scenes, we shot a lot of that footage with very long lenses. We just tented out our subjects and backlit the hell out of things, but that gave us an interesting look."

McCulloch submits that shooting in Sydney — a world-class filmmaking center — eased the scheduling pressures of the *Two Hands* shoot, as equipment was readily available and he could work with his regular crew, including gaffer Peter Bushby, key grip Gary Lincoln, focus puller Anna Townsend, and clapper/ loader Rebecca Steele. Cameras and lenses were supplied by Panavision and processing services were handled by Atlab.

Jordan concludes, "I learned a hell of a lot from Malcolm while making this film, and I'd never seen anyone light quite the way he did. I'm still relatively naïve to the filmmaking process, but he was able create the look I wanted on the schedule we had."







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Production Slate

compiled by Andrew O. Thompson



A Runaway Hit by Eric Rudolph

Writer/director Tom Tykwer has struck paydirt with *Run Lola Run*, an arty, adrenalized action thriller that was Germany's top box-office hit in 1998, grossing \$14 million. The picture went on to become an international indie favorite, earning raves at last year's Toronto Film Festival and winning the Audience Award in the World Cinema category at the recent Sundance Festival. Tykwer's creative movie, which hits U.S. theaters this month, is now being hailed as the harbinger of a new wave in German filmmaking.

Lola was born when Tykwer's imagination conjured up the image of a young woman sprinting across a major metropolis. Building on this notion, Tykwer drew further inspiration from his own 1992 short film *Because*, which was shot by Frank Griebe, who also photographed *Deadly Maria* and *Winter Sleepers* for the director. "In *Because*, a couple argues and then starts up again,

with the argument taking a different tack," explains Tykwer, who collaborated with Griebe once again on *Run Lola Run*. "We had no money, so the entire film took place in their apartment. [On *Lola*,] we thought we could set that idea outside and let it grow into something bigger and wilder."

Run Lola Run begins as a bumbling young hoodlum named Manni (Moritz Bleibtreu) calls his girlfriend to tell her that she has 20 minutes to dash across the bustling city of Berlin and bring him 100,000 deutsche marks which he can then use to pay off enemies who want him dead. Springing into action to save her man, redheaded post-punk protagonist Lola (Franka Potente of It's a Jungle Out There and Am | Beautiful?) bolts out of her house in a frantic race against time. Despite our heroine's energy and passion, the situation doesn't exactly come up roses, but the film presents a total of three "what if" scenarios, each with a different denouement.

Hot on the heels of Denmark's

Dogma '95 collective (see full text of the group's "Vow of Chastity" on page 84 of last month's issue) comes the formation of the X-Filme Creative Pool, a band of young German filmmakers — including Tykwer, Lola producer Stefan Arndt and directors Dani Levy (Silent Night) and Wolfgang Becker (Life is all You Get) who are on a mission to produce "arty mainstream" movies. Reared on American indie films and glossy studio productions, the members of X-Filme are well-versed in both disciplines: the ultraenergetic Lola was shot on a 28-day schedule with a budget of approximately \$1.8 million.

Both Tykwer and Griebe feel that they've made an innovative, offbeat picture. "Experimental films always seem like work, and they can be exhausting to watch," opines the director. "We wanted to make the most entertaining experimental film one could see." The picture's three-strand temporal race emerged from Tykwer's desire to explore cinema's ability to "organize time in a different way. To me, one of the miracles of film is that you can restructure time and do things you always wished you could do in reality but can't. Having set out on this exploration of the different ways our lives can go. and of the different faces and possibilities life shows us every day, we decided to do the same with the cinematography."

Scenes involving Lola and her beleaguered beau were photographed on 35mm color film, while interludes in which neither appear were captured on video. As soon as Lola or Manni enter a scene, however, the format suddenly switches back to film. "Using video for

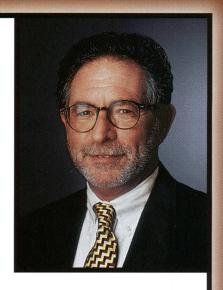
Lola (Franka Potente) hits full stride as she races to save her boyfriend.

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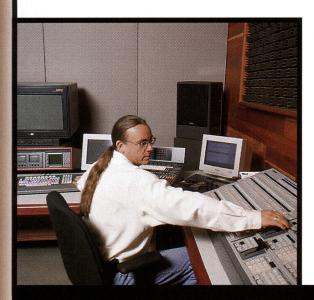




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the other characters places Lola and Manni at the center of this world in which miracles can happen, just like in the movies," the director notes. "The only world we take for real is that of Lola and Manni. The rest is artificial, because Lola's and Manni's actions are going to influence what happens to the other characters. In a sense, the film images are true and the other images are untrue."

The audience is alerted to the picture's unorthodox style long before any video footage appears, however. *Run Lola Run* opens with a huge crowd of people massing together to spell out its

sits watching TV and talking on the phone, a bottle of whiskey at her side. As Lola dashes past the door to her mother's bedroom, the camera pans around to the television screen. Suddenly, we see the animated Lola character from the title sequence reappear on the television screen and run down the apartment building's stairway. "In exploring the various tools of filmmaking - such as 35mm color film, Betacam video, blackand-white film [used in flashbacks] and color photographs [for flash-forwards which outline the fates of people Lola encounters] — we could not leave out animation," notes Tykwer, "Animation is



Indebted gangster courier Manni (Moritz Bleibtreu) and Lola pause to take stock of their predicament.

title, letter by letter. Given the production's limited resources, this unending array of bodies required a bit of digital augmentation. "Hiring 5,000 extras would have pushed our budget way beyond our means, so we shot 300 extras forming each letter," Tykwer explains. "I then spent about a month working on a Domino film composer, making the footage look like one shot." (In the finished film, the credits play over an animated caricature of Lola running through the streets of Atonne.)

Once Lola realizes that she might be able to save Manni, she sprints out of her room and whizzes by her mother, who one of the basic elements of filmmaking that we all grew up with. Its use gives you the feeling that absolutely anything is possible. Appropriately, the animation is the point where the different versions of the story begin to diverge."

Tykwer and cameraman Griebe felt perfectly at ease with this melange of techniques, partially because of their long friendship, which sprang from the duo's love of movies. They first met 12 years ago, when both were working as projectionists in Berlin cinemas. "Frank and I started talking about films and seeing them together. We would often go to a *nouvelle vague* French film and a

get a grip on light control



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mainstream American movie in the same day, and we saw no contradiction [in enjoying these disparate styles]. We talked film aesthetics and about how the camerawork affects the experience. We had a lot of aesthetic discussions over the years, but we don't do that so much anymore, because we know each other's sensibilities so well."

According to Tykwer, a key contribution to Lola's success is Griebe's ability to "energetically create exciting moving-camera shots that work well in the editing. He understands how moving shots — such as those of Lola running through the streets of Berlin - can connect in post. During a lot of the shooting, I didn't realize how advanced the connections between Frank's shots were. He set things up in a strong, fluid direction so that we were easily able to find our way throughout the editing."

A long preproduction process and extensive storyboarding helped the filmmakers establish the look of Run Lola Run. "We wanted to shoot in the summer, but we didn't want strong, hard light." Griebe explains. "Because we couldn't control the weather, we devised and tested various filters, and ultimately selected combinations of coral and sepia. We used those colors in various strengths and combinations for interiors and exteriors, according to the conditions. The filters helped us keep a consistently warm, cozy look."

The filtration proved to be most effective when Kodak's 100 ASA EXR 5248 and 200 ASA EXR 5293 tungsten stocks were pushed two stops, as they were for the entire production. Griebe did not use any 85 correction filters to match the tungsten-balanced emulsions to the daylight sources, relying instead on the coral/sepia filter combination to shift the color temperature balance. Tykwer notes, "I felt that if we let the film go too bluish and cold, the audience would become more aware of it's construction. which I didn't want," Tykwer notes. "The most important thing for me was for the audience not to think about how we did things. I don't like films that show off so that you are distracted from the emotions, story developments and

characters." (When one reporter commented that Lola simply moves too fast for this to happen, the director responded happily, "This was the idea!")

Tykwer confirms that Lola's mane of radiant red locks demonstrates that he and Griebe are "in love with colors that are as strong as possible. I don't want [pallid] skin tones that make the actors look as if they are dying, so in addition to keeping the color palette strong on the production-design end, we also pushed the colors a bit in timing."

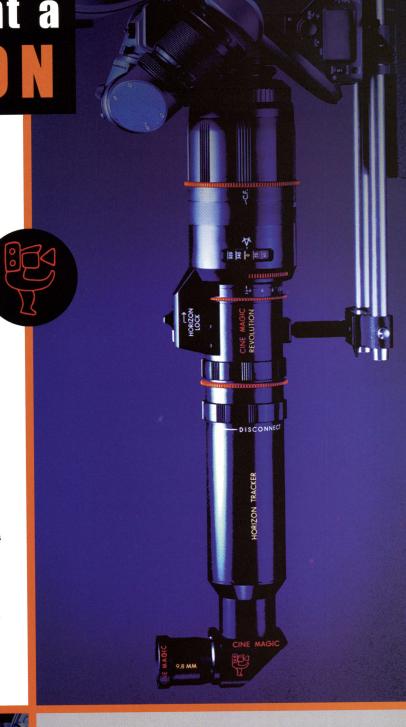
Griebe's lens package included Zeiss standard primes (35mm and wider units were mainly used for scenes of Lola at rest), along with two Cooke zooms: the 18-100mm and 25-250mm. Interiors were lit mainly by HMIs placed outside windows, and small, daylight-balanced Kino Flos set up inside the spaces. Since many of the interiors were shot with swooping camera movements and normal to wide lenses, hiding fixtures was tricky. "We kept the lights in the corners as much as possible, using a lot of wall-spreaders," the cameraman explains. In choosing not to fight the practical interiors' space limitations, he utilized a "simple lighting style, with a low number of instruments, high contrast and little back or rim light." Lighting contrast was slightly reduced for video scenes

The entire picture was shot with a daylight-balanced ambiance, except for the couple's heart-to-heart bedroom conversation, which was suffused in a scarlet ambiance from a red-gelled tungsten lamp. Lola's extensive running scenes were often photographed handheld from a moving vehicle, such as a four-wheeled motor scooter. "[The footagel is sometimes very shaky, but we're quite pleased with the shots," says Griebe, who always operates the camera himself. He adds that the running sequences employed no fixtures or light modifications of any type, just "the correct angle of the sun."

After casting actress Franka Potente as Lola, the filmmakers assumed that the trim 23-year-old would be physically fit enough to handle the role. which often required eight hours of

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The 70mm 3-D film Encounter in the Third Dimension is filled with magical, eyepopping effects, many of which were created via computergenerated imagery.

running per production day. However, the actress warned that she might not be up to speed, thanks to her love of cigarettes. "We therefore cut down the amount of running scenes shot each day to four or five hours at most," notes Griebe, who minimized the number of takes by shooting action scenes with two cameras. (His A-camera was a Moviecam Compact, while an Arriflex 435 MOS unit filled the secondary slot.)

Despite the manic pacing and grab bag of visual techniques on display in Run Lola Run. Tykwer feels that from a narrative point of view, his film is still a conventional motion picture. "It's a new kind of film, but only externally," he concludes. "It still functions according to the structural principles of classical drama. We have a clear and passionate love story, action principle and a mission that continues throughout. As far as theme and content are concerned, it is absolutely universal. This woman's passion brings down the rigid rules of the world surrounding her. Love can and does move mountains. Over and above all the action, the central driving force of Run Lola Run is romance."



Three-Dimensional Diaspora

by Kathleen Fairweather

Encounter in the Third Dimension (E3-D) breaks more than a few cardinal rules in establishing a new benchmark in virtual moviemaking and 3-D cinematography. Through live-action photography and CGI, E3-D presents a detailed history of 3-D effects, featuring classic film clips and the latest in multi-dimensional innovations imagery. The 15-perf/70mm picture is a large-format release from NWave Pictures, and was produced in association with Iwerks Entertainment, Movida and Luminair.

Director Ben Stassen is no stranger to informative large-format filmmaking: he previously helmed *Thrill Ride: The Science of Fun,* a 15-perf/70mm survey of rollercoasters, motion simulators and flight simulation technology (see Production Slate, *AC*



Aug. '97). E3-D starts off its account with early cave drawings, and then the discovery of architectural perspective utilized by 16th-century Renaissance artists. Three hundred years later. Sir Charles Wheatstone employed a similar perspective when inventing the stereoscopic viewer. Next up are examples of the Lumière brothers' cinematic stereography, along with campy clips from such Fifties-era 3-D films as Bwana Devil. Later interludes include modern theme-park sequences and a Jules Verne-like thrill ride. These cinematic chronicles are punctuated by intermittent appearances by Elvira. Mistress of the Dark; in one sequence, the gothic goddess's visage looms large within hundreds of bubbles that seem to float right out into the audience.

While motion picture 3-D has been around for over 100 years — beginning with the twin-camera "analgyph" system patented in 1891 by Ducos du Haron — the image-capture process has slowly evolved into an intricate science. Computer-fabricated imagery now affords moviemakers complete control over the typical problems entailed in producing 3-D pictures — namely, convergence, focus and interocular distance, the last of which is very difficult to predict until footage is viewed in dailies.

However, CGI could not overcome another major difficulty: the lack of available equipment. According to

producer Charlotte Huggins (another *Thrill Ride* veteran), only two 3-D large-format camera systems are currently available. Both weigh 250 pounds, neither has a sync-sound system, and the film magazines can only handle 1,000' (approximately three-minute) loads — a limitation that can be quite trying, since reloading can take up to 30 minutes.

As a result, much of E3-D was fashioned in the virtual realm. When compared to its multi-dimensional, largeformat counterparts (Into the Deep, The Last Buffalo, L5, Hidden Dimension, Imax Nutcracker, T-Rex. Wings of Courage. Across the Sea of Time and Mark Twain), this \$6 million production includes a much more extensive use of visual effects. "What's novel about our film is that we used the digital technology as a production tool." Stassen elaborates. "The computer became our virtual studio, and the entire production process was influenced by it - not only technically, but creatively and financially as well."

According to Stassen, the Jules Verne-like "Journey Through the Center of the Earth" sequence serves as a ridefilm on its own merits. Having cornered more than half of the global market, NWave Pictures ranks as one of the largest ride-film suppliers. "The reason this sequence was conceived to be a continuous POV shot is precisely because we are also distributing 'Journey' as a stand-alone ride-film,"



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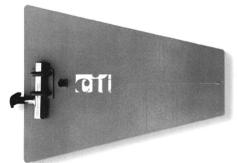
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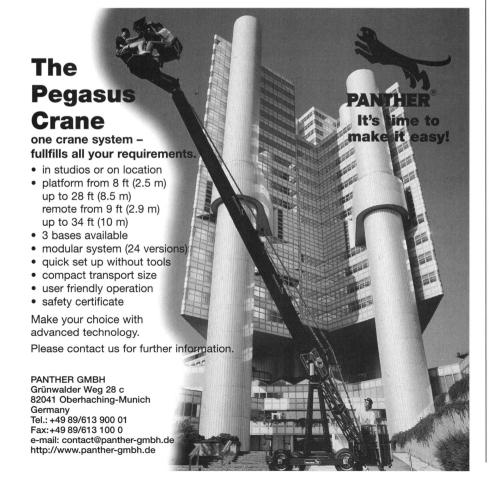


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Stassen notes, adding that Iwerks Entertainment owns exclusive distribution rights to the footage.

He adds, "To design such a sequence, we first start with what we call a 'motion map,' which is a layout of the entire camera trajectory through the different environments. We then model all of the environments in a very rough and basic fashion, and animate the camera movement. This second phase enables us to determine the timing of the film to make sure we don't go too fast or too slow for the ride to end up at around four minutes in length [a ride-film's standard running time]. The next step is to do the full modeling of all the objects and environments, and create the textures and the lighting, before we do the final rendering of the images in high resolution.

"Instead of trying to bring a conventional dramatic story to the screen and failing at it — because of a lack of appropriate financial resources. inadequacy of the production tools, and the challenge of mastering this exciting new cinema language — I set out to create a film that would break ground in the use of the digital technology. Hopefully, this will tickle the audience's interest and make them aware that large-format 3-D has great potential as a brand-new form of audio-visual entertainment."

The entire set was created on a desktop computer graphics workstation at a digital studio. Animators first fashioned polygonal wireframe models, and then added various texture maps and lighting in a typical computer-graphics process. "We had to completely design the virtual sets before shooting the liveaction material," Stassen details. "Unfortunately, for budgetary reasons we did not get a chance to do any tests. Doing a test in a digital production costs almost as much as the real thing. Therefore, our philosophy was to go for it without any testing, which was really nerve-racking."

If the entire set was virtual, how were the actors successfully incorporated into the 3-D frames? "We used our computer-graphics workstations as a

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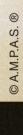
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Three representations of *E3-D*'s computercreated environments. In the first frame, Elvira (Cassandra Peterson) was photographed against greenscreen (the staircase is the only real element within shot), and the set was later constructed in 3-D with Alias/Wavefront programs.







virtual studio," Stassen reveals. "All of the sets and environments were created in the computer, and the actors were shot in front of a greenscreen.

"To duplicate the setup on the live-action stage, we first had to design all of the sets, break down all of the camera angles and determine the exact virtual camera position to the inch. In other words, we had to predetermine the physical distance of our digital camera from the subject, the height of the camera from the ground, and the angle and the lens. Once in the greenscreen studio, we had to re-create the exact same conditions. The accuracy of the whole process is extremely critical in 3-D. The live-action elements are not simply integrated over a 2-D background — the actors have to be positioned in space. If you make the smallest mistake, the 3-D effect does not work.

"The Elvira sequence was shot in a greenscreen studio — the only physical set was a 10-step staircase painted green," Stassen continues. "Her sequences were actually much easier to shoot than the scenes with the Professor [played by Stuart Pankin], because Elvira does not interact with her environment; she simply does her song-and-dance routine in front of the camera.

"We shot that sequence with a 3-D mirror rig, using Panavision cameras. The selected takes were then scanned, and we composited the live-action images of Elvira into the 3-D background using Silicon Graphics workstations and Alias/Wavefront Composer software at 4K resolution."

Placing principals into the same frame with synthetic elements added during postproduction has always posed challenges, as evidenced by the technological obstacles surmounted in such seminal films as Mary Poppins, Tron (AC Aug. '82) and Who Framed Roger Rabbit? (AC July '88). In E3-D, however, the entire greenscreen is replaced by the virtual 3-D set and effects. Stassen and his animators had to fit the actors precisely within the virtual set, while simultaneously accommodating the scope of 3-D. Except for the actors, all of the film's elements are computer-

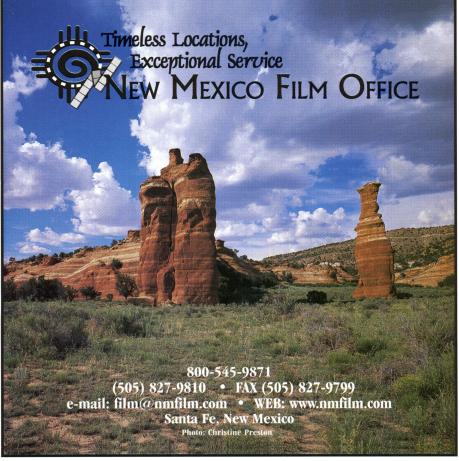
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generated.

Unlike the live-action sequences, the film's wacky dancing skeletons and a subsequent ghost segment were animated by Anthony Huerta with Alias/Wavefront's Explore software. In fact, breathing life into the skeletons and the phantom required the same process as the animation for any of the film's moving objects — Max the Robot, mechanical gizmos, video screens and title sequences.

Due to its emphasis on mechanical motion as opposed to character animation, *Encounter in the Third Dimension* did not use any character-animation software. "It is extremely difficult to direct like this," adds Stassen. "You have to edit the entire film in your head before you shoot the live-action. Once you decide where the camera will be placed and which lens will be used, you're stuck with those choices — you cannot restage the scene as you go."

Watching dailies on a largeformat screen entailed a long commute for the moviemakers: Huggins often made the 35-mile drive from Los Angeles to Ontario just to see five seconds of footage. That was nothing compared to the miles logged by Stassen, who racked up serious frequent-flyer points ietting back and forth from his base in Brussels. Belgium. "We had to see the footage screened in large-format 3-D to make sure that the effects worked." says Stassen. "I also had to learn how to read things from the computer screen. Sometimes we'd think we had a 3-D effect, but we'd later discover that the image was flat.

"One of the challenges of digital production is that it's a very slow process. By the time the creative work is done on a particular scene, completing the rendering and final compositing of the various layers can take days, sometimes weeks. Then, the film recording will take several more days. Furthermore, at \$750 minimum per screening, we cannot afford to screen dailies every day. I came up with a very rigid structure. First, I planned the film on a spreadsheet — Excel, to be exact

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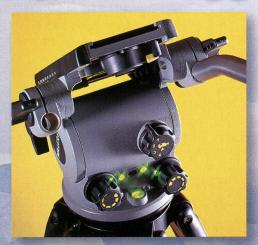
which team rescued from Arctic

MOSCOW (Kyodo) A three member team from January

od health, NHK's Moscow bureau said. ivel to Moscow on Wednesday where go a health checkup, the bureau said. oned NHK's Moscow bureau to report

n the island for about three months. and in early September to film a doc-

Last bid to rescue Arctic film crew



"The Arrow 50 retained the subtlety of control on the drag settings and kept functioning smoothly in the worst conditions".

Cinematographer Rory McGuinness made news recently when he was stranded for six weeks on an island in the remote Siberian arctic. While awaiting rescuers, Rory kept shooting the polar bear documentary in conditions that made incredible demands on crew and equipment.

"We had minus 25 to 30 Celsius, plus windchill, but while we had filmstock and bears we just kept shooting. It soon sorted out the gear. Some of it froze solid, while other things just kept going. The Arrow 50 retained the subtlety of control on the drag settings and kept functioning smoothly in the worst conditions".

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Actor Stuart
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shtick in a
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studio. With the
help of digital
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image will be
composited into
an intricate
workshop (as
seen on the
facing page).

and once the plan was done, everything was locked in."

Production on E3-D began in October of 1997, with the first two months devoted to set design and camera angle breakdowns. Live-action footage was captured on an L.A. soundstage in December. And even though the artistic team (12 animators, one system operator, and one film recorder specialist) had a schedule of 10 months, they still had to work at breakneck speed to integrate live-action into the virtual set and execute a vast amount of CG animation.

In terms of hardware, E3-D employed Silicon Graphics computers (mostly Octanes with R10,000 processors) coupled with Alias/Wavefront, Explore and Dynamation software. Even with all of this firepower, one must still wonder how many gigabytes it took to store the completed film in digital format. Stassen reveals, "Depending on the kind of shot, the picture resolution in the film varies from 5.5K to 4 K, and 3K

per frame. Full CGI shots have the lowest resolution. CGI shots with live-action elements were rendered at 4K resolution. For live-action shots with some CGI elements, we need to work at 5.5K resolution. Therefore, the size of a frame can vary from 12 to 40 megabytes. It takes about 17,250 gigabits of storage

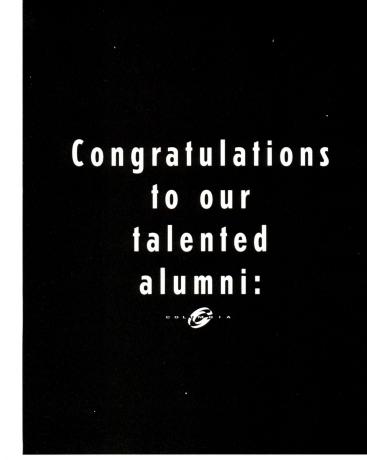


space to do this kind of 3-D large-format picture. The rendered images are stored on 420 40-gigabyte DLTs."

"Storing a single Imax frame takes somewhere between 12 to 40 megabytes for rendered frames. Liveaction images scanned at 5.5K are about 92 megabytes prior to the color-correction process. The digital file contains all kinds of data that enables us to do color-correction. Once color-correction is completed [via the digital file], the file size drops down to between 25 and 40 megabytes.

Due to the immense file size, transferring 115,000m digital images to 70mm film is a slow process, one which requires almost two minutes per frame. "Unfortunately, the much faster laser recorders available to feature filmmakers are not yet capable of recording to 70mm film. Our two film recorders shot 24 hours a day for seven days a week.

"We took a totally different approach to the character animation for our next film, *Alien Adventure*, which will be completed in less than a month. *Alien Adventure* will actually be the first animated full-length 15/70 mm 3-D film. The animation of the aliens was more sophisticated than anything done in *Encounter*. We used specialized software to create and animate the



Janusz Kaminski

ASC Theatrical Nominee and Academy Award winner for *Saving Private Ryan* and

Michael Goi

ASC Movie-of-the-Week/Miniseries Nominee for *The Fixer*

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on order at Imax, Iwerks and Megasystem. [In total,] this represents a investment in hardware and theater construction of more than \$2 billion." (The 10 feature-length, large-format 3-D films released to date represent a total production investment of less than \$100 million)."

Stassen concludes. "The hardware manufacturers have spent less than \$5 million in developing production tools for the large-format 3-D filmmakers. Imax corporation has built two 15/70 3-D cameras. Iwerks will soon complete its first large-format 3-D mirrorrig system. Not only are there too few cameras available to substantially increase current production levels, but as I mentioned earlier, the existing cameras are prototypes at best, with many technical drawbacks. So while I am convinced that large-format 3-D filmmaking could very well be the most innovative out-of-home entertainment platform of the next decade, it's also clear that the genre is only in its infancy."

The Professor holds court

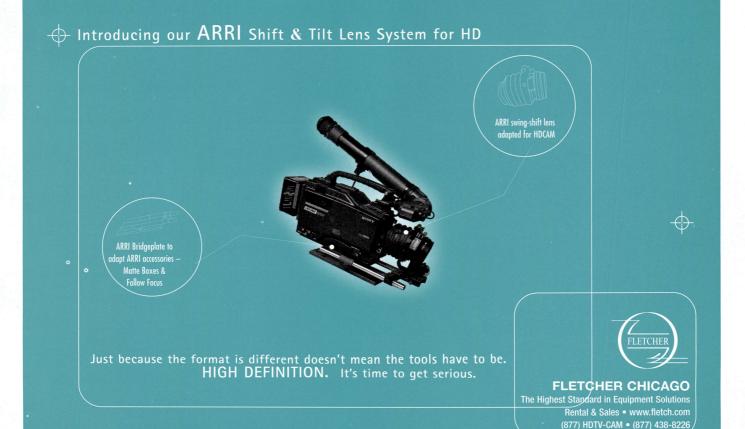
environs of his CG laboratory.

within the

elaborate

aliens, and then integrated the fullyanimated and rendered aliens into our CGI background in the same way we integrated the Professor and Elvira in the CG backgrounds in *Encounter*.

Stassen also has several other large-format 3-D projects on the horizon. Considering the expanding market for three-dimensional, wide-frame films, the director is quite confident that it's an excellent investment. "Currently, there are 62 large-format [870 and 1570] 3-D theaters up and running around the world, with an 80 additional 3-D theaters



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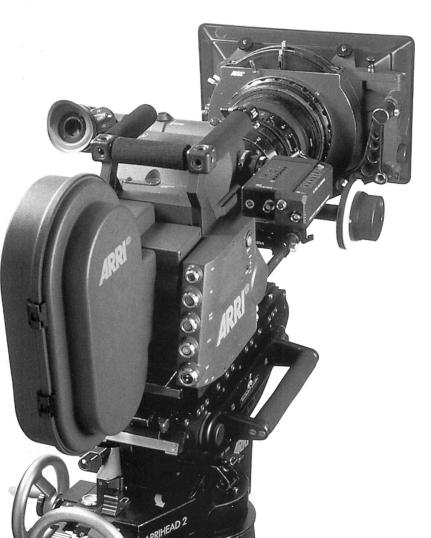
The Cameras Used To of Winners of The

"GODS AND MONSTERS"

Winner: Best Screenplay Adaption

Director: Bill Condon

DP: Stephen M. Katz



"SAVING PRIVATE RYAN"

Winner: Best Director

Cinematography

Film Editing

Sound

Sound Effects Editing

Director: Steven Spielberg

DP: Janusz Kaminski, ASC

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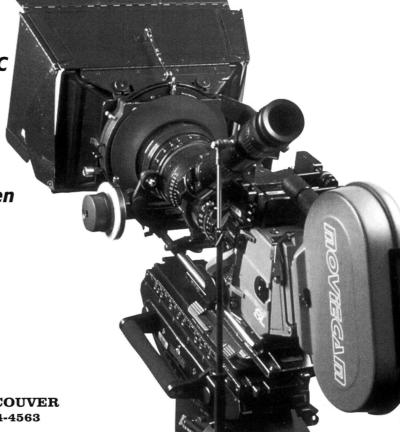
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Psycho Iler

I am deeply hurt by your calling me a woman-hater. I am not. But I am a monster. I am the Son of Sam... I love to hunt. Prowling the streets looking for fair game — tasty meat. The woman [sic] of Queens are prettyest [sic] of all...

 excerpt from a note penned by serial killer
 David Berkowitz in the spring of 1977

trangely enough, serial killers have always maintained a hallowed niche in popular cinema. Examples of the genre range from the truly disturbing (Silence of the Lambs and Henry: Portrait of a Serial Killer) to the irreverent (Man Bites Dog and Natural Born Killers) and historically infamous (The Boston Strangler and From Hell, the Hughes Brothers' upcoming feature about Jack the Ripper).

Those who resided in New York City from July of 1976 to August of 1977, however, found little entertainment value in the activities of loner-turned-madman David Berkowitz. For those 13 months, Berkowitz kept the five boroughs in a state of panic as he periodically — and randomly — gunned down women with long brunette hair. In recognition of the assassin's revolver of choice, the media branded the

Director of photography Ellen Kuras, ASC helps Spike Lee explore a serial killer's impact on New York in *Summer of Sam*.

by Andrew O. Thompson Photography by David Lee



nefarious nightstalker the ".44-Caliber Killer." Berkowitz later dubbed himself the Son of Sam.

This memorable piece of New York history serves as the backdrop

of Spike Lee's new film Summer of Sam. Contrary to most films about serial killers, Lee's picture does not attempt to probe Berkowitz's deranged psyche. Instead, this

ensemble piece (with a script penned by actors Michael Imperioli and Victor Colicchio, and later polished by Lee himself) uses the frenzy surrounding the serial killings as a sounding board for its themes of social conformity and media-fueled paranoia.

The film begins in July of 1976, as punk music and disco fever are sweeping the nation. Aspiring punk rocker Ritchie (Adrien Brody) has returned to his predominantly Italian-American neighborhood in the Bronx to catch up with some old including Vinny (John pals, Leguizamo), a philandering hairstylist. Because the budding guitarist (and part-time dancer at a local gay strip joint) is sporting spiked hair, an affected Cockney accent, and a plethora of piercings, some of his former friends brand him a freak of nature. Matters are made worse when he inducts the local tramp, Ruby (Jennifer Esposito), into his alternative lifestyle, recruiting her as his partner in both punk licks and porno flicks.

To help him craft this jagged tale of neighborhood conflict, Lee once again teamed with New Yorkbased director of photography Ellen Kuras, ASC, with whom he had previously collaborated on the Oscar-nominated documentary Four Little Girls (see AC Jan. '98) and "Niggericans" (a never-aired episode of HBO's Subway Stories series), as well as various commercials, the most recent of which are a series of spots commissioned by the United States Navy. A key figure in the indie film scene, Kuras is a two-time recipient of the Sundance Film Festival's Best Cinematography Award (in 1992, for Swoon, and 1995, for Angela). Her other credits include I Shot Andy Warhol (see Sundance Festival coverage, AC April '96), Postcards from America, Unzipped, the HBO film If These Walls Could Talk - Part I, Just the Ticket and The Mod Sauad.



Stock-Picking

Though most of Summer of Sam was captured on Kodak's Vision 500T 5279, its most interesting imagery was rendered on two separate Eastman reversal stocks: 5239, a 160 ASA daylight Ektachrome emulsion that was been used to elaborate effect by cameraman Malik Sayeed on Lee's film Clockers (see AC Sept. '95) and by Robert Richardson, ASC on *U-Turn* (ACOct. '97); and 5017, a still-photography print stock that Saveed rated at 64 ASA for portions of Clockers and He Got Game. Although relatively unstable, crossprocessed reversal stocks have become integral to Lee's cinematic style. Since his experiments on Clockers, the director has cross-

processed reversal emulsions on his last three pictures: Get on the Bus (AC Oct. '96), Four Little Girls and He Got Game.

Kuras was already familiar with the results of cross-processing, having utilized 7250, a 400 ASA tungsten Ektachrome stock, for all of "Niggericans." She explains, "Working on 'Niggericans' was my first introduction to cross-processing. Although I knew the look from Clockers, I wanted to explore a cool [blue] tone through lighting and color timing. Fortunately for me, we decided to keep the subway cars [that we shot in static, which meant that I could light the interior of the cars from the subway platform. Taking into account the existing interior

Opposite page: Riddled with suspicion, the strung-out Vinny (John Leguizamo) accosts his old pal Ritchie (Adrien Brody) and questions the motivations of his newfound alternative lifestyle. This page: After a gig, Ritchie shares a tender moment with Ruby (Jennifer Esposito). the neighborhood harlot of his Bronx stomping-ground.

Psycho Killer

Vinny's old pals loiter in their dead-end neighborhood while reading about David Berkowitz's killing spree. To lend daytime exterior footage a hot summery tint, cinematographer Ellen Kuras, ASC utilized an antique suede filter. lighting of the car and the illumination on the platform, I decided to use the fastest reversal stock possible [the 7250]. Then, we had to rely on a 'poor man's process' to give the illusion of movement. I wanted to light it with very hard, blown-out edges which would shine through opal diffusion on the subway windows, so I needed a lot of latitude in the stock. The piece was to be released on film as well as TV, so the color timer and I put the negative up on the analyzer to see how far we could to take the film to the cool side. A reversal film that's cross-processed [as negative] tends to have an amber cast, so I

states. "I really respect Spike's dedication to projected dailies. He knows it's important for the director of photography, assistant cameraman and production designer to see what's really happening on film. Film-to-tape dailies can be inconsistent and inaccurate. The person operating the film-to-tape machine could make a change that affects the way you light the film: if the blacks become a little bit crushed, you might think that you don't have enough exposure in the shadow areas and you might start adding more fill, even if there is a grey scale or Macbeth chart at the head of the roll.

photographer by tradel had wanted to shoot all of the scenes before the fashion shows in black-and-white," recalls Kuras. "I suggested that we shoot some Kodachrome Super 8 just to give some splashes of color before the fashion show. But in the editing room, he ended up mixing a lot of the different stocks - very grainy, pushed black-and-white footage followed by some color yet it all worked together because the story was strong, and because Isaac was a very entertaining character. I decided to not even touch the first answer print. The diversity of looks caused by the color shifts was appropriate to the film's funky style and editing. Using the cinematography to work symbiotically with the story is something that Spike also ascribes to — he places more emphasis on getting strong acting and story than spending hours on putting in beauty lights."

documentary's director and a still



asked the timer to make it as blue and black as possible — like a blue-tinted black-and-white Xerox. I had to make sure that I could get the effect on film before going to the tape transfer."

Being able to gauge the behavior of reversal in a projected (rather than broadcast) format definitely proved beneficial while the filmmakers were viewing their footage from *Summer of Sam*. Since Lee prefers projected dailies, Kuras never had to evaluate footage from a video monitor and ascertain a correct color schematic within the narrow parameters of a small display screen. "Today, it's a luxury for cinematographers to see projected dailies," Kuras

That's especially true with reversal — it could be rendered very differently on video than on a print stock."

Though Kuras had employed a veritable cocktail of emulsions on Four Little Girls (a mixture of three 16mm stocks — EXR 7293, 7245, and 7250 reversal — for photos and B-roll material, along with Super 8 Kodachrome 40 stock), her fluency in multiple film stocks came from lessons learned during production of Unzipped. This insider's look at the world of fashion maven Isaac Mizrahi not only mixed the Super 8, Super 16 and standard 16mm formats, but also combined color monochromatic footage. "Originally, Douglas Keeve [the

Doing the Light Thing

Much of The Summer of Sam transpires during the sweltering summer of 1977. As a result, Lee wanted the imagery to indicate the intense heat of a New York city summer — which, as any resident of the Big Apple knows, is marked by a muggy, humidity-filled atmosphere. As a visual guide, Lee asked Kuras to view his 1989 film Do the Right Thing (photographed by Ernest Dickerson, ASC). Kuras also watched Natural Born Killers and two versions of the Jack the Ripper story as a primer on serial-killer films. After conducting several tests on emulsions and exposures, Kuras opted to use antique suede filters in front of the lens during day shooting. This tactic lent the colors a more monochromatic look, as well as a period Seventies feel.

While filming daytime exteriors set in the Bronx, Kuras had to be very judicious in the placement of her fixtures, due to the shoot's unstable weather patterns and Lee's preferred working method, which always involves two-camera coverage. "Spike wanted a 'hot' look, so I tried to give him as many hard backlight and sidelight edges as possible. Those [highlights] had to hug the edge of the frame. I also advised the grips not to dull down the cars or do wetdowns so that the kicks, highlights and glares would play as much as possible, and so the streets would have a blown-out look. While we were shooting, the weather changed quite a bit from hour to hour — in the morning we would have sunshine, and in the afternoon it would cloud over and sometimes rain. Trying to keep consistency throughout a scene was difficult without a lot of available room to put lights or Condors out of shot. We were often on a dead-end street, and we sometimes were backed up right to its end.

"In addition, many of the scenes were played like ensemble pieces. We often used two cameras [Arri 535-Bs] to allow the actors freedom and get matched coverage, sometimes in a scope encompassing 300 degrees. There could be seven actors and cameras moving with hard sidelights; I was constantly challenged when the principals would walk through each others' lights, because they were casting shadows all over each others' faces." She relied upon timing as a means to compensate for the variable cloud cover.

To convey the sense of humidity and atmosphere at night, Kuras employed pre-exposure flashing. During preproduction, she experimented with filters and a Lightflex, but found the effect somewhat confining. "The Lightflex gave a haze to the film that was very similar to New York's hot, humid nights, during which the blacks aren't really quite black," says Kuras. "However, we would have faced the problem of double reflections from headlights playing off the filters in front of the



lens. We often had cars driving straight at camera, so I would have had a lot of double lights going through frame. We sandwiched filters as much as we could, and used a tilting matte box, but we just couldn't avoid the reflections in certain situations because the camera was moving so much. Flashing was a viable way to achieve the same effect while keeping the image clear of double reflections."

In keeping with Summer of Sam's sweeping scope, citywide tension mounts when all electrical power goes dead during the infamous blackout of '77. Chaos is the order of the night as TV reporter John Jefferies (played by Lee) reports



from Harlem, where mobs have begun burning and looting the neighborhood. Though the lighting for this night exterior was motivated primarily by fire effects (burning barrels, smoke and lighting instruments placed out of frame), Lee opted for shooting it with reversal stock. Kuras managed to persuade Lee to go with the faster 7239 stock instead of the 5017, since one of the cameras would be running at a rate of 40 to 48 fps. The cinematographer recalls, "We used two 80' Condors rigged with space lights, but the grips rigged them in a line instead of in a square-box pattern. We placed them at either end of the road to light the street for ambient fill. We then took some 6K Pars, removed the lenses, and used them almost as if they were searchlights sweeping across the scene. Besides having smoke and fire barrels, we also implemented the idea of using safety lights — the battery-operated kind with a strange salmon color that are placed in storefronts. We put flame gels over those lights as if they were coming from inside the stores, yet the instruments were played outside of shot."

As it turned out, the look of the night riot scene turned out to be radically different from the filmmakers' wildest predictions. When combined with the reversal stock, the "searchlights" imprinted a white-out like aura upon whatever objects or

Ritchie, Ruby and their raucous backup band, Late-Term Abortion, rip up the stage at CBGBs, the famed New York nightclub which once showcased emerging punk/new wave acts such as **Blondie, Talking** Heads and the Ramones. Production designer Therese DePrez (Happiness, Swoon) had to redress the space's interior to approximate the look of the club's halcyon days. **Below: Ritchie** offers a toast to the crowd.

Psycho Killer

During a night of nomadic clubhopping, Vinny and Dionna (Mira Sorvino) end up in front of CBGBs, only to be scandalized by the rogues' gallery of punkers assembled at its entrance.



persons crossed through their panning beams. This blown-out brilliance imbued the 5017 with the X-rayed appearance of a film negative.

During the prep period, Kuras and Lee discussed a Seventies' color scheme consisting mostly of burnt orange, red and yellow. Kuras and gaffer Ray Peschke (JFK, Natural Born Killers, He Got Game) also chose an appropriate palette of color gels for the key sources and backlights. To mimic the flares' flickering firelight, they used a reddish-orange gel dubbed Mayan Sun (Rosco 318). Other gel shades included Yellow Sun (GAM 455), Flame (GAM 375) and occasionally Straw. In consideration of the cross-processed reversal work, certain colors were added to Therese DePrez's production design; royal blue, yellow and orange, for example, happen to be exceptionally susceptible to supersaturation through crossprocessing.

Kuras also let loose with gelled Par cans placed just out of shot as backlights during a neighborhood block party held by reigning Bronx mob boss Luigi (Ben Gazzara) during the blackout. This sequence includes handheld shots following baseball bat-toting thugs, who make their way into the crowd after conducting an organized patrol of the darkened streets. "Given that it was blackout, it wasn't easy to think about how to light such a broad area," says Kuras. "We had to turn off existing practicals — streetlights or lights from the interiors of houses. In addition to party lights that would be run off of generators, we set up a Condor rigged with space lights, as well as a 12' x 12' muslin overhead for ambience."

The Unholy Sheen of 5017

For all intents and purposes, 5017 is a still photographers' stock; the emulsion therefore had to be reperforated so that it could be run through Kuras's Arriflex cameras. In order to do this work, Kodak required a month's worth of advance notice, along with a minimum order of 14,000'. "I really like what Malik Sayeed did with 5017 in *He Got Game* — he's a very innovative cinematographer," states Kuras. "There was one beautifully shot scene where some guys dressed in fluorescent

orange and yellow came into a green room and threw a pair of red dice on the floor. The colors were supersaturated and had a lot of black in the shadow areas. I was struck by the way the colors were rendered, particularly the greens."

A hot, contrasty, yellow-green hue permeates the dance space of the Virgo Club, a local disco where the troubled Vinny and his wife, Dionna (Mira Sorvino), go to boogie down. This offputting tone resulted from shooting 5017 with practicals gelled with a Yellow Sun filter. Notes Kuras, "[That filter] has a green cast, but during the timing, I didn't take all of the green out. It's common practice for timers to automatically time green out. In this instance, I wanted to play off certain strange colors so that the look would convey the feeling of being unsettled. Just think about how creepy that time and place was - 1977 with the Son of Sam on the loose. Nobody knew who the killer was. People were very afraid and even suspected each other - he could have been your next-door neighbor.

"5017 is a stock to be reckoned

on the edge of the millennium



some things are still made by hand

ntroducing the Panaflex Millennium—Panavision's new studio sync-sound camera which encompasses many new features. The Millennium continues our tradition as the industry leader in the advancement of motion picture cameras and lenses. Motivated by input from our customers, Panavision's products are the result of a team effort to create sophisticated, innovative, extraordinary tools which at their most basic level are handmade. Our reward comes from knowing that the images captured will transport

Psycho Killer

Right: TV journalist John Jefferies (Spike Lee) does an on-the-spot report from the streets of Harlem during the infamous blackout of 1977. Below: Vinny and Dionna dance a disco tango at their local hangout, the Virgo Club. Kuras shot many of these dancing sequences on 5017, a 64 ASA reversal stock. When coupled with practicals gelled with a Yellow Sun filter, the resulting footage resonates with a pea-green tone.



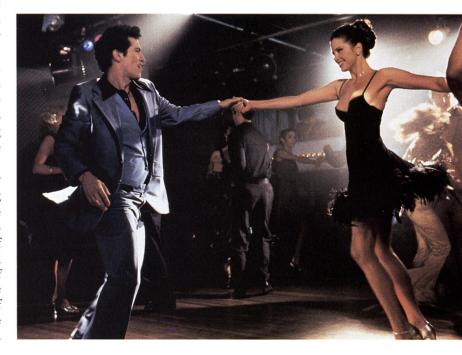
with," she adds. "The shadow areas will go very black unless there is enough fill. Without the ability to hide big lights in a small location, 5017 is a struggle because of the extreme contrast and slow ASA, especially for night exteriors. We tried to use it effectively, as in the scene where Vinny and Dionna are dancing in the Virgo Club. We used [strobing] Lightning Strikes units as our keys, along with some backlights and a couple of hard sidelights. A few years ago, I did something similar on a music video for the band Lush with director Mark Pellington, but I was using 5245, which is a very slow [50 ASA] stock. I just put in a few effects lights and then used the Lightning Strikes units to reveal what was in the shadow areas."

Compensating for 5017's slow speed proved a bit too revealing during filming of a steamy sequence set in the infamous swingers club Plato's Retreat. After an evening of clubbing, Vinny and Dionna wind up indulging in a Dionysian orgy of partner-swapping and substance abuse. Photographed with lights of different color temperatures, the Plato's Retreat scenes resonate with

varying tints. However, Kuras had to brighten every area with enough illumination (4K, 2.5K and 1.2K HMI Pars) to expose for the 64 ASA emulsion — much to the actors' discomfort, given their semi-nude state. The cinematographer went to great lengths to reassure the performers, particularly Mira Sorvino, that once the footage was printed down, the debauchery would not be too overt onscreen.

The cinematographer also brought 5017 into play to capture David Berkowitz's inner torment as he is holed up in his bedroom. Crouching on a ratty mattress, the Son of Sam (David Badalucco) clutches his head in mental anguish as the incessant barking of a neighbor's dog drives him past the brink of madness. In other scenes, Berkowitz is shown scrawling his deranged rantings on the cluttered apartment's plaster walls. Imbued with turquoise hues, the walls' porous surface seems to pop off the screen. "I wanted the blacks to go off into darkness, and to give the colors a more super-saturated feel," offers Kuras. "In a way, that harkens back to the music video and commercial experiences I've had; when you get into the film-totape transfer, you can crush the blacks and manipulate the colors. Also, I used wide-angle, 100mm close-focus and longer focal-length macro lenses in the apartment, which helped to throw the background out of focus and underline a more claustrophobic look. Using close-focus lenses in a dramatic situation is very different than on a commercial. With almost no depth of field, the assistant has a tremendous challenge to keep the action in focus. The close-focus lenses also work most effectively when the subject is very close to the camera, which is not always the case in dramatic blocking. No matter what situation my A-camera first assistant, Carlos Guerra, was placed in, he and the other assistants did a fantastic job."

In addition to the lenses mentioned above, Kuras's package consisted of Zeiss Superspeeds (between the 18-85mm range), Zeiss Standards (20mm, 40mm, 100 mm and 135 mm) and two Cooke zooms (an 18-100mm and a 25-250mm). Kuras also employed the Arriflex SwingShift system, using 45mm,





JERZY ZIELINSKI

"Part of the magic of making films is that you are dealing with magic full of contradictions and compromises. Sometimes the script inspires me. Other times it happens on the set — someone turns their head, the light catches them a certain way, and something wonderful happens. It's an organic process. I trust my instincts. A reality-based film with slight imperfections sounds like a contradiction, but usually that's more believable than an overlit, over-composed scene. Cinematography is like different people using the same piano to play the same music, and somehow each of them is unique. You have to be willing to take chances if you want to make movies with stories worth telling."

Jerzy Zielinski earned the equivalent of an Academy Award® in Poland for *Aria for an Athlete* only five years after graduating from the national film school at Lodz. His credits include *Paradise*, *Swing Kids*, Academy Award-nominated *Little Surprises*, *Powder*, *Washington Square*, *Home Fries*, and *Killing Mrs. Tingle*. *The Third Miracle* is next.

JERRY MELINEW



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Psycho Killer

During the blackout, Ritchie, Ruby, Dionna and Vinny do dinner by candlelight inside the pizza parlor owned by Dionna's dad. Though the candles are supposedly illuminating the room, Kuras added a nonmotivated overhead source to accent the ambience.



90mm and 110mm lenses. The special lenses were placed on a locked-off camera to cover the murder sequences, which were portrayed as they occurred in reality — without a second's warning.

Spike's Gotta Have It

While Lee granted Kuras autonomy to explore her cinematography in a creative fashion, there were a few instances in which the director called for some "signature Spike shots." One entailed shooting scenes with anamorphic lenses with the intent of leaving the resulting image "squeezed." Lee had previously utilized this technique on Crooklyn (photographed by Arthur "A.J." Jafa) for a 20-minute sequence set in Martha's Vineyard. In that film, the elongated imagery indicated the young female protagonist's unease with her new suburban surroundings after leaving her hometown of Brooklyn for the summer.

In Summer of Sam, this tactic is used twice. In the first shot, the tormented Berkowitz is seen crouched over, howling for the "demonic" dog to cease its endless barking; the squeezed footage implies that the canine tormentor is a figment of the killer's demented imagination. Squeezed images are also used in a quick-cutting montage

of Ritchie playing "air guitar" in his garage to the Who's "Baba O'Riley" and then strutting across the stage at Male World, a strip joint for homosexual hustlers.

During this sequence, the shots in Ritchie's garage alternate between reversal stock and standard negative; more often than not, negative was used for shots that pushed the narrative forward, whereas reversal was employed for interludes that revealed Ritchie in quiet, personal moments. Kuras designed Ritchie's living space with rather wild lighting (a mixture of bug lights, cool white fluorescents, practical globes, and golden-gelled spotlights) resulted in rather radical color shifts on the reversal stock. She explains, "Ritchie is a very controversial figure who's become a suspect just because he's gone through a transformation from Bronx neighborhood kid to wannabee rocker in the punk scene. To me, his inner life takes place in the garage, where he allows himself to be vulnerable, so I wanted to mix the color temperatures of the practical lights to convey a sense of inner complexity."

Kuras notes that she owes an immense debt of gratitude to Joe Violante, vice president of Producer Services at Technicolor New York, who did all of *Summer of Sam*'s nega-

tive processing, as well as Steve Blakely at DuArt, the lab that handled all of the reversal work.

Of course, no "Spike Lee joint" would be complete without the director's trademark moving dolly shot, which makes it appear as if a character is "floating" in the air, typically when he or she is supposed to be walking down a street. An interesting application of this technique occurs as Vinny's life hits rock bottom: his long-neglected wife has left him after finally tiring of his infidelities, and he's turned to cocaine for relief. In his crazed state of desperation, he is finally convinced that the nonconformist Ritchie must be the .44-Caliber Killer; while looking at a Son of Sam police sketch in a local tabloid, Vinny drifts down the street as the camera peers up at him. The perspective then slowly shifts until Vinny seems to be upside-down.

Kuras notes that this shot benefitted immensely from the expert handling of dolly grip Lamonte Crawford and key grips Bob Andres and Chris Skutch. "Obviously, Vinny is going through personal turmoil, so it could be said that the camera move is Spike's interpretation of the character at that point," she expounds. "To do the shot, we put a camera on one end of a sled dolly and John at the other end. We then rigged the camera on a three-axis Weaver/Steadman head that enabled it to circle 360 degrees on the lens axis." During the timing stage, Kuras opted to print this shot up slightly; the blown-out tones further convey the depths of Vinny's disorientation.

Another technique carried over from Lee's prior movies is the use of hot, overhead sources that envelop actors in halos of glowing light (a style popularized by Robert Richardson, ASC). Used in counterpoint to the cross-processed reversal's unusual tonalities, these "auras" often signify the comfort of a famil-

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Psycho Killer

iar environment. In Marie's Salon, for instance, a narrow spot Par can was used to provide a flattering accent amid the space's warm, eggcream-like haze. The technique is particularly apparent during a raunchy sex scene involving Vinny and hairstylist Gloria (Bebe Neuwirth); during the duo's tryst, hot light traces the contours of the beautician's milky skin, lending literal meaning to the phrase "sexual afterglow." Kuras also employed similar tactics for scenes set in a local burger joint and in the pizza parlor owned by Dionna's father.

These auras were sometimes applied to more extreme effect as well. At one point in the story, Vinny and Dionna find themselves outside the velvet ropes at the infamous hotspot Studio 54. Cruising past a long line of hopeful clubgoers, the pair saunter under an awning through several hot pools of light

(generated by 12K Pars). Given that the sequence is shot on reversal, Dionna almost becomes a beam of incandescent white light as the hard ambience gleams off of her platinum wig and silver lamé ensemble. "That 'Bob Richardson hard light' downlight from overhead that's four to five stops overexposed — is something that Spike called for specifically," Kuras says. "Because it's non-motivated, there were times when I wouldn't even have thought to put it in. Spike likes to use these particular hotspots to punctuate a dramatic effect. There's definitely an emotional impact as a person walks through this very hot light, burns out and loses detail. Theoretically, one might not be able to explain it. When I was studying in France, I took a lot of classes about the 'theory' and 'meaning' of the image, but one can't always provide a theoretical basis for everything."

In the months since last summer's Sam shoot, Kuras and Lee have spent some time collaborating on commercials. At press time, the pair were prepping for Lee's 14th, asyet-untitled feature film, which has an August start date. After three feature-film collaborations together, it's obvious that Kuras revels in the experimental nature of Lee's directorial style. "It's a pleasure to find a director who is willing to take risks in exploring radically visual ideas," she agrees. "Spike was very flexible and innovative in his approach on all of the films that he and I have worked on together. On Summer of Sam, we weren't held back by what convention dictates. We followed a more personal interpretation, if you will, and I was more than willing to go along with Spike on that."



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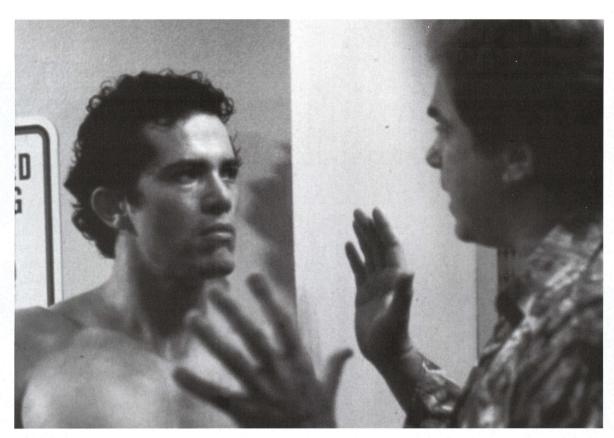


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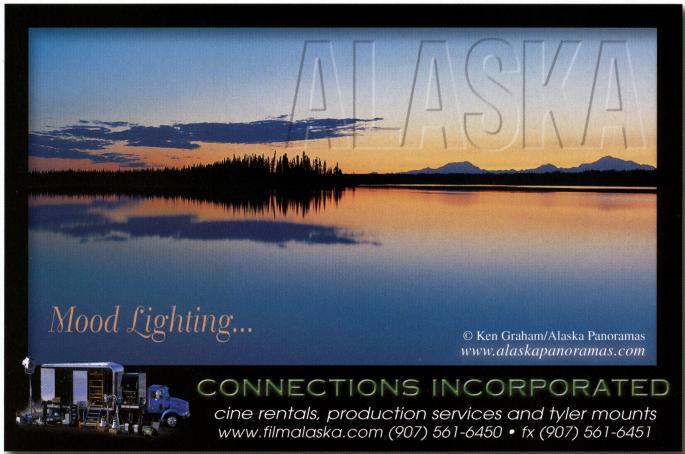
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A tense, cokedup Vinny listens as Joey T. (Michael Rispoli) explains why Ritchie has to be the Son of Sam — and what the neighborhood should do about it.



SPIKE LEE'S SEVENTIES FLASHBACK

The maverick director discusses his modus operandi for *Summer of Sam*.

Interview by Stephen Pizzello

titular figure from street hustler to savvy statesman; *Crooklyn* (1994) contrasted the edginess of inner-city life with the comforts of the suburbs; *Clockers* (*AC* Sept. '95) explored the



Lee composes a frame in the classic manner under the watchful eye of Ellen Kuras, ASC (at far left).

ver the course of his career, Spike Lee has excelled at capturing the urban experience onscreen. After exploding onto the scene with the sexuultra-low-budget charged, comedy She's Gotta Have It (1986), the director has injected a vibrant sense of life into a variety of cinematic cityscapes. Do the Right Thing (1989) made a powerful statement about interracial relationships in a neighborhood threatening explode; Mo' Better Blues (1990) captured the moody ambience of a jazz musician's life; Malcolm X (see AC Nov. 1992) tracked the rise of the

hazardous lifestyle of crack dealers; and *He Got Game* (1998) set father against son on asphalt basketball courts.

With his latest film, *Summer of Sam*, Lee chose to revisit an epochal moment in the history of New York City: the middle months of 1977, when various events and trends converged to create a memorable mosaic of the world's most volatile metropolis.

Lee recently took time out of his frenetic schedule to answer *AC*'s questions about his latest picture (or "joint," in the director's playful parlance).

American Cinematographer: Why did you choose this particular topic and time frame — the Son of Sam killer, and the summer of 1977 in New York City — as the basis for a film?

Spike Lee: I grew up in New York, and I found that whole summer to be significant. What I really want to try to emphasize to people is that this film is not just about the Son of Sam - David Berkowitz. This film is more about how the Son of Sam killings affected and changed the lives of 8 million New Yorkers during that particular summer. The summer of the killings was also one of the hottest ever on record in New York, which consequently caused a big blackout; Studio 54 had just opened, and disco was at its peak; Plato's Retreat was in full swing, so to speak, with that whole sex thing going on; the punk scene was happening at CBGB's; and in addition, it was Reggie Jackson's first vear with the Yankees.

Also, I came home from school that summer. I had just finished my sophomore year in Atlanta, Georgia at Morehouse College, and I couldn't find a job. I had gotten a Super 8 camera, so I spent the whole summer just going around New York City and filming stuff. That was really when I decided that I wanted to be a filmmaker.

Back then, did you immediately think that the Son of Sam story would make a good film, or did that idea come along later?

Lee: That idea occurred to me much later, but I'm still trying to find my Super 8 footage so I can cut it into the movie. I've looked all over the place, but I can't find it! [Laughs.]

How did this project develop?

Lee: I was approached by Michael Imperioli, a very fine actor who's been in several of my films, as well as a few of Martin Scorsese's. He also has a lead role in that great new TV series *The Sopranos*. He came to me and said that he and his friend

Victor Colicchio had a really good story about Son of Sam and that whole summer. They knew I had a development deal, and I told them I'd read it. I loved the script, and I told them I wanted to get it made. My first intention was to serve as executive producer on it, so we made a wish list of actors and directors, but we couldn't get any of our top choices to commit. I wasn't really satisfied with the people we could get to commit, so I eventually decided to do a rewrite and open the story up a bit. It was a great script as it was, but I felt that we needed to incorporate more of New York City instead of just setting the story in this one Italian neighborhood in the Bronx. Once I finished my rewrite, I decided that I wanted to direct it.

What kind of research did you do in preparation for the film?

Lee: We did a ton of research. I tried to read everything I could about psychopaths and serial killers. I also wanted to see all of the news reports and commercials that were airing during that period, and to dig into the whole music scene as well. I was driving various researchers mad!

Even though the film is set in the Seventies, it seems that you managed to resist satirizing that period.

Lee: A lot of times when people go back and do period films about the Seventies, they make fun of that era — the hair, the clothes, the dancing, the music. When you do that, it's almost as if you think that the subject matter isn't serious or worthy, and I think that comes across in the movie. I let everyone on the film know that I didn't consider the period of the film to be a joking matter. I had lived through that era, and I had worn those clothes; back then, I thought I looked great, and everyone else felt that way about themselves too. I didn't want our movie to have a condescending attitude. That can be hard to resist, because it's very easy to make a quick joke about bellbottoms or polyester shirts, but we wanted to do more than that with this film.

You have a small role in the film as a TV reporter, and it seems as if you wanted to emphasize the media's presentation and distortion of the Summer of Sam story.

Lee: I think that's a very important point. The New York media really played up the frenzy, and the circulation of the *Daily News* and the *Post* doubled while Berkowitz was killing people. Every day there was a new headline. I know the reporters were just doing their jobs, but I think they also contributed to the frenzy and the mayhem that was gripping the city at the time.

It's ironic, because that type of coverage can both spur a killer on and simultaneously lead to his capture.

Lee: That's true. I mean, Son of Sam started writing letters to Jimmy Breslin that were published in the papers. I actually gave Jimmy a cameo in the film. His opinion of Berkowitz was short and sweet — he called him a sick f***. [Laughs.]

Along with Martin Scorsese and Woody Allen, you're one of the country's most prominent New York-based filmmakers. How familiar were you with the neighborhoods presented in *Summer of Sam*?

Lee: To tell you the truth, I wasn't really too familiar with the Bronx before I made this film. The only time I ever went to the Bronx was when I went to Yankee Stadium. In saying that, I don't mean any disrespect to that part of town, but if you live in Brooklyn, you just don't really go to the Bronx! To a New Yorker, those places are like the two opposite ends of the world.

Many of your past films have been set in African-American neighborhoods, but this one takes place in an area that's predominantly Italian.

Lee: Well, this is not specifically an African-American story, it's

more of a story about New York as a whole. Most of my films have been set in New York, so I felt more at ease telling this particular story. I've done other stories with Italian-American characters — *Jungle Fever, Do the Right Thing, Clockers* — and I think one thing that helps me in that regard is that I'm a good listener. If I don't know about something first-hand, I ask! It's as simple as that.

I know it sounds stupid to say, but I have a lot of Italian-American friends [laughs], so I felt very comfortable dealing with that aspect of the story.

What kind of coaching did you give to the actors in this picture?

Lee: The cast members were all very fine, trained and talented people, so I didn't have to do much coaching. I just wanted them to be authentic, and since they were mostly Italian-American actors, they knew what I was after. I needed them to be 'in the moment' at that particular point in time, during the summer of 1977.

Your director of photography, Ellen Kuras, ASC, demonstrated that she really knew the 1970s New York scene in *I Shot Andy Warhol*. She's also shot *Four Little Girls* for you, as well as numerous commercials and music videos. What makes the two of you click so well?

Lee: Ellen is not only a great person, but she's a listener who tries to be flexible and adaptable. So often when you work with people, they're set in their ways — in this business, you've got to be flexible. Also, Ellen comes from a documentary background, which I feel is a great asset. If I say, 'Ellen, let's not use a light here,' she's fine with it. I think a lot of cinematographers light not for the movie, but for their fellow directors of photography. They're more concerned about what their peers are going to say. That approach might be all right for them, but it might not be what's best for the film.

Ellen is also very aware of the





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SPIKE LEE'S SEVENTIES FLASHBACK

actors. I've worked with cinematographers who will set up a light right in an actor's face, without caring about the discomfort it causes — that type of director of photography only cares that the shot looks good.

What did you and Ellen talk about during prep?

Lee: We discussed using a lot of different stocks. A lot of the story is told through the media, so we wanted to use video and shoot stuff off of TV screens. We also used some reversal stock and cross-processed it, as I'd previously done on *Clockers*. We basically just kept our minds open to every possibility, because I thought the script called for a lot of different looks.

Ellen and I tried to plan all of the visual elements during preproduction, but she sat next to me every day in dailies, and we made some adjustments here and there. When I got to the set every day, everyone would gather around me — the gaffer, the grip, the AD and Ellen — and we'd go over what we were going to do.

Did you improvise much on the set?

Lee: Sometimes everything was planned out, and other times we'd have to do some blocking. Nothing on this film was storyboarded, though. I storyboard very little. I don't mean that I just show up on the set and make things up, but I feel that storyboarding can sometimes lock you in too much. If you're trying to get something very specific, or if you only have one or two takes, or if it's a big, big shot, then storyboards can be helpful. The riot sequence in Do the Right Thing is an example of a situation where storyboards were very useful. I also used boards for the assassination sequence in Malcolm X. All of that stuff was very involved.

I noticed several times that you used your favorite technique of placing actors on cranes and dollies to create an unusual floating sense of movement

Lee: Yeah, the famous 'Spike Lee dolly shot.' [Laughs.] In this film, we basically used that for scenes where characters were in various mental states caused by their use of uppers, downers, cocaine and so on.

We also used the Steadicam for five or six days. [Operator] Larry McConkey did a few shots where the actors were standing on a Titan crane; the camera rode along with them as the crane was lowered to the ground, and then Larry followed them along as they walked off it.

Did you use two cameras for dialogue scenes, as you generally have in the past?

Lee: I always shoot with two cameras simultaneously, because it makes a great difference to the actors. Actors will eventually be spent if they keep giving their all while reading lines offscreen. If you shoot the actors at the same time, they can avoid stepping on each other's lines.

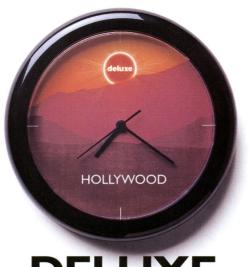
On this film, we had some long dialogue scenes involving four or five people, and those were the situations that I found to be the toughest. We always had two dollies covering the action, and we had to keep them from running into each other.

What kind of pace do you maintain on the set?

Lee: I work very fast. I don't like to wait around, and it's always been that way. I shot *She's Gotta Have It* in 12 days.

Almost all of this film was shot on location. Do you generally prefer real settings to studio work?

Lee: I don't really like shooting on stages. When you shoot at a real location, it's not fabricated, and you get that extra flavor of being there. I don't really mind if we have to make some adjustments because it's a real location. It would be hard for me to go to the same stage every single day. That would drive me up the wall.



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Smooth Derator



Director of photography Tom Priestly, Jr. pairs with director John McTiernan for a stylish retooling of *The Thomas Crown Affair*.

by Christopher Probst and Michael Hirsh

Photography by Berry Wetcher

iven director of photography Tom Priestly, Jr.'s heritage, it's no wonder he ended up working in the film industry — the director of photography's family tree reads like a timeline of cinema history. In 1916, his grandfather was working on Westerns as a stage carpenter at Warner Bros. Studios in Ft. Lee, N.J. His uncle, Jack Priestly, ASC, became a noted cinematographer, working on such features as *Stiletto*, *The Midnight Man*, *The Subject Was Roses* and *The*

First Deadly Sin, as well as numerous television shows. Priestly's father, Tom Sr., started out as a documentary cameraman for Universal Newsreels during World War II, covering such events as the liberation of Paris and Dachau, as well as the signing of the Japanese surrender aboard the battleship U.S.S. Missouri. He later became an NBC News director and traveled the world for Huntley-Brinkley, shooting and directing documentaries for the series White Paper.

Despite the Priestly family's extensive background in film, Tom Jr. entered college to become a chemical engineer. He became a bit bored with the subject, however, and in his third year of studies he "made the mistake" of visiting the set of the TV series *Naked City*, which was being photographed by his uncle Jack. After taking one look around the set, he knew that he wasn't cut out for a life of Bunsen burners and chemical equations.

The awestruck Priestly soon

jumped into cinematography headfirst, and began assisting such renowned cameramen as Owen Roizman, ASC (on The French Connection, The Heartbreak Kid, The Exorcist, Network, The Three Days of the Condor and The Taking of Pelham 1, 2, 3), Gordon Willis, ASC (on Annie Hall) and Néster Almendros, ASC (on Sophie's Choice and Kramer vs. Kramer).

Priestly eventually began operating for Czech cameraman Miroslav Ondricek, ASC on such pictures as Hair, Ragtime, The World According to Garp, Silkwood, Amadeus, A League of Their Own and Awakenings. He also operated on the features A Chorus Line, Sleeping with the Enemy, Q & A and Parenthood.

After becoming a director of photography, Priestly began shooting second unit on such features as Maximum Risk, Eraser and Deep Impact. He advanced to first-unit cinematographer on the films Above the Rim, Calendar Girl, Dr. Jekyll and Ms. Hyde, Blue Chips, Then the Fireworks and Tales from the Crypt: Bordello of Blood.

Priestly's latest effort, The Thomas Crown Affair, reteams him with director John McTiernan, for whom he shot second unit on Die Hard III. The film is based on the 1968 film of the same name, which starred Steve McQueen as a wealthy businessman who moonlights as an urbane criminal, and Faye Dunaway as an insurance investigator in hot pursuit. The new version of the tale stars Pierce Brosnan as Crown and Rene Russo as Catherine Banning, his attractive nemesis.

Hired eight days into the production after the original cinematographer left the show, Priestly says he basically "hit the ground running and then kept on going!" He adds, however that "after reading the script and getting a feeling for the story, I felt the film was very much a classic 'old-time' Hollywood



to have some of that old-Hollywood charm to complement the actors, but the actors are the strong-point of the film," he continues. "In the Thirties and Forties, they really didn't have the benefit of softer sources, [mainly due to the slower-ASA film stocks]. Softer lighting techniques really didn't become feasible until the early 1960s. Of course, there were many great cinematographers in the Thirties and Forties who achieved beautiful and glamorous looks, even with hard light. But while I was watching

Pierce Brosnan and Rene Russo

production — something that could have starred Cary Grant and Katherine Hepburn. It had all of the elements: great-looking people, great locations, clever writing and interesting characters. Thomas Crown doesn't have car chases and big gun battles. It uses more of a classic-style narrative framework in which the two lead characters create a tightly-woven sexual tension. Given all of these elements, I tried to give the visuals a lot of glamour while still keeping the look as simple as possible.

"The lighting in the film had



Opposite page: Amid tony

surroundings,

Thomas Crown (Pierce Brosnan)

shows off his

and sartorial style. This page,

left: The crew

moves in for a

closer view on location. Below:

Soft overhead

scene at hand an

lighting and

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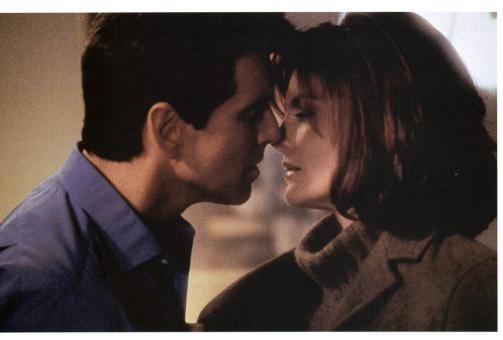
elegant

ambience.

criminal stealth

millionaire

Smooth Operator



The normally tight-lipped Crown loosens up a bit when he finds himself attracted to insurance investigator Catherine Banning (Rene Russo).

rehearse on this film, I knew there really was only one way to light them. I mainly lit them with three-quarter or half-light and used what I'd call a *natural* source — a softer-toned lighting that wasn't too dramatic or film-noir."

Although Priestly had this classic film aesthetic in mind, the cinematographer didn't necessarily apply old-school techiniques in his photographic approach. "I didn't really use any diffusion to convey 'old Hollywood," he reveals. "Instead, I tried to convey that idea through the use of color. Even though the film stocks are more sophisticated today, I used color to give a sense that you've stepped back 30 or 40 years and are involved with a more classic film characterization from that old-Hollywood era. We didn't want the photography to overpower the story or the acting; we wanted it to complement the story and serve as a catalyst. The audience shouldn't be aware of the photography. They should just know that it feels right. It's almost as if the characters demanded that the lighting be that way. The more you get into the film, the more you feel what's right for the actors - the colors, the quality of light, edgelights and backlights. All of the small little nuances that indicate when something is important, or to guide the viewer's eye, were done with a very subtle hand. We didn't want to make the photography too offensive. It's a fine balance between drama and the lighting. But the story should always win out. And rightfully so."

While taking over a production in mid-stride presents a variety of obstacles for any cinematographer, Priestly faced the added pressure of stepping into the fray with McTiernan (Die Hard, Predator, The Hunt for Red October), one of today's most visually aggressive directors. "John has an amazing insight into the story and how it should be told, so it's definitely his film," Priestly says. "He is still very open to suggestions, but because we didn't have the benefit of preproduction and a lot of time to discuss the look together, we kind of had to feel our way through the film. We'd look at a particular scene and talk about how we could approach it visually, or perhaps try something different. Not having seen any of the locations, I had to scout locations

on weekends and run to different places to stay a step ahead of everybody else.

"John likes to push the limits," he continues. "When you shoot with him, no shot is an easy shot. Every shot gets 'McModified,' as we would say. He feels that the more difficult the shot is to do, the better it's going to be. He goes through this thought process where he looks at a situation, and puts it through his mind, and then works it and works it. He comes up with a great solutions, but it is a test for everyone. That's great, though, because it keeps you on your toes."

As an example, Priestly cites a scene shot inside a Bentley. "Normally, the camera is placed low because of the ceiling height in the car, but he had us mount the camera upside-down, using a prism on the lens to invert the image. That way, we could take the lens almost to the ceiling, making the actual POV much higher than the normal front-to-back POV in a car."

Not surprisingly, a primary challenge for Priestly on Thomas Crown was anticipating what McTiernan was going to do. "You can go to a location, look at it and talk about it, but when it comes time to set things up and shoot, it becomes a whole different issue," he says. "John is a very complex director. It's just amazing standing by him; you can almost see his mind working, trying to get the most out of every shot. He loves to do the odd thing. For example, in one sequence, Rene's character has just found out that Pierce Brosnan's character is leaving a building with another woman. She's outside, standing in the rain, and John wanted to dolly along with her on Madison Avenue. Instead of just doing a standard dolly shot, he had the camera operator put the camera on his shoulder, pointing it backwards. As Renee began to walk forward, the operator would also walk forward in front of

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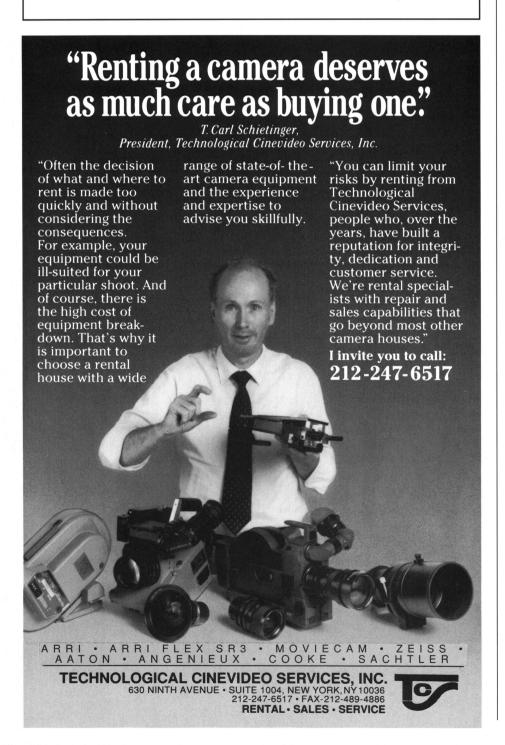
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Smooth Operator

her, looking at a monitor. Because his mind was working in reverse of what the camera really sees, he'd occasionally pan the wrong way to follow her, then quickly adjust; it added a bit of edge to the scene. You have to expect the unexpected with John. He wants to trick you by design — to have you make that little false move and come back."

Priestly shot Thomas Crown with Panavision Platinum cameras in McTiernan's preferred anamorphic format, using Primo prime and zoom lenses. "With anamorphic," states Priestly, "it's often harder to get an edge-light in because you see the world left-to-right. That tends to simplify your lighting to a degree. However, at the same time, it also forces you to work a bit harder to achieve some of the results you want. John loves to run the gamut of lenses; he'll start off a scene with a 40mm or 50mm and then jump right up to a 100mm, shooting four different takes to get that one moment that will work for the picture. In a compositional sense, I don't think John ever places a character in the middle of the frame. He always wants to give a sense of scope and push the sides of the picture out. He's a great advocate of giving the audience something to savor. He gives his films scope and he plays that to his advantage."

The cameraman employed three main film stocks for the shoot. He used Kodak's Vision 200T 5274 for most of the interiors (although he did switch to the faster Vision 500T 5279 for some lower-light nighttime sequences) and Vision 250D 5246 for the film's exterior daylight work. "In New York," he says, "you always find yourself running into situations where you're shooting late into the afternoon. With the 250 ASA [5246], I had a good chance of meeting all of our requirements without changing film stocks. The 'canyons' in New York get pretty dark. The 46 is a

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Smooth Operator

A series of shots from the Metropolitan Museum set built in Yonkers. Top (from right to left): Cameraman Tom Priestley, Jr., director John McTiernan and crew members set up a shot with an Egripment crane. Center: Adding a bit of white-card fill during a dolly move. Bottom: A China ball illuminates Crown's larcenous pursuits.







great stock that handles overexposure tremendously well, so I'd expose more for the shaded side of the faces.

"We also post-flashed the entire film from 5 to 10 percent to soften the contrast a little," he reveals. "The amount of flashing really depended on the look of the scene. All of my dailies were printed on the old 5386 stock, and now I have to time the film on the new [Vision print] stock, so that's a bit of a tough deal."

The Thomas Crown Affair was shot almost entirely in and around New York. In fact, several of the film's key sets were built within a large converted warehouse space in Yonkers. "The film was shot half on location and half on stages mostly in New York City and in the studio we created in Yonkers. However, we did shoot a large boat scene off the coast of Norwalk, Connecticut, as well as an aerial scene of Pierce and Rene in a glider that particular sequence combined exterior footage shot by our second unit with greenscreen elements of the actors that we shot in the studio. When you go to a location, you learn something from that location, whatever that might be. There may be a source of light off to the left or the right that may indicate to you, 'This is the way to light the scene.' All you then have to do is enhance that look to fit your film's style."

A key setpiece in the film is New York's famed Metropolitan Museum of Art. When the Met's executives proved less than enthusiastic about allowing the crew to film an art theft in the real museum, the production re-created the landmark on their Yonkers stage, duplicating a large exhibition gallery, five sidegalleries, and various corridors and hallways. "For most of the largeroom interiors in the film, we used what we call Bay lights — large overhead soft-boxes fitted with

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FLYING HIGH WITH SPACECAM

by Michael Hirsh

hat do you do when the director says, "I want to open with a POV shot that starts in outer space, comes down over New York, through Central Park, and ends on the roof of a car parked on Fifth Avenue"? This is the kind of question that Ron Goodman, president of SpaceCam Systems, Inc., is accustomed to hearing dozens of times a year. Recent feature credits for the company's gyrostabilized camera systems include Con Air, Speed, Twister, Titanic, The Horse Whisperer and the Goodman and visual-effects supervisor John Sullivan decided to use a helicopter-mounted SpaceCam to pick up the shot about 2,500' above Manhattan, come down as low as possible, and then switch to a descender-mounted SpaceCam on a construction crane for the final dive to the ground.

None of this caused Goodman and his team to break a sweat. The government agencies controlling the airspace over Central Park were another story. "It's a very noise-sensitive area," Goodman





Top right: A close view of the SpaceCam descender platform, which is powered by an onboard 2K generator and uses two small fans to oppose any spinning. **Bottom: The** Crown crew rolls a **Technocrane** into position. The construction crane in the background

upcoming Inspector Gadget.

For John McTiernan's *The Thomas Crown Affair*, the SpaceCam was used to photograph all of the real-time imagery for the aforementioned opening sequence, and to capture extremely up-close-and-personal footage for a glider sequence and a catamaran race.

After discussing the concept for the film's dramatic opening shot,

describes, "and we really didn't get the flight permission we wanted. Ideally, we would have gone down with the helicopter to the same height as the top of the crane, but that was impossible."

What veteran pilot Al Cerullo was able to do, however, was fly the aircraft almost 2,000' straight down, to an altitude of 500'. (Contrary to popular belief, it's almost impossible

to fly a chopper straight down; some forward motion is necessary for control and so the pilot can see where he's going. The only time a helicopter can fly straight down vertically is when the engine is dead, and the craft auto-rotates to make a controlled landing.) Sullivan and his team plugged the gap from there to the top of the 200' crane, where the shot picks up from the SpaceCam

Photos courtesy of United Artists Pictures and SpaceCam

was used for

the SpaceCam

descender unit.

They repeated the fall from the crane several times, always stopping between five and three feet from the roof of the car and giving the visual-effects crew a chance, as Goodman puts it, "to massage the images and put everything together so it would look very convincing."

But it's the glider and catamaran sequences in *Thomas Crown* that really show what SpaceCam can do. The past few years have seen major advances in aerial photography. "Every shot used to be the same," says Goodman. "It was a wide, slightly shaky shot that would last for a few seconds, then they'd cutaway to a close-up, which was usually staged on the ground against the sky or some other nondescript background.

"The sailplane and catamaran shots were two of the most intense shoots that we've done. We got extremely close to the sailplane. We had the camera probably five feet from the rudder a couple of times. We could have done a lot more stuff if we'd the real actors had been in the cockpit."

Since co-stars Pierce Brosnan and Rene Russo were going to be photographed in a glider cockpit in front of a greenscreen, it was essential for the SpaceCam team to get a number of very specific shots. The responsibility of communicating the needs of the film company and assuring that the shots were in the can fell to aerial coordinator Mischa Hauserman, who briefed camera pilot Cliff Fleming, the glider pilot and Goodman prior to the shoot.

The catamaran race sequences were another matter entirely. Goodman says the scene consists almost entirely of grab shots. "Often, the most efficient way to shoot something like that is not to plan a thing. If you plan things, you inevitably think about them a bit too much, and you can't really stage the kinds of spontaneous actions that

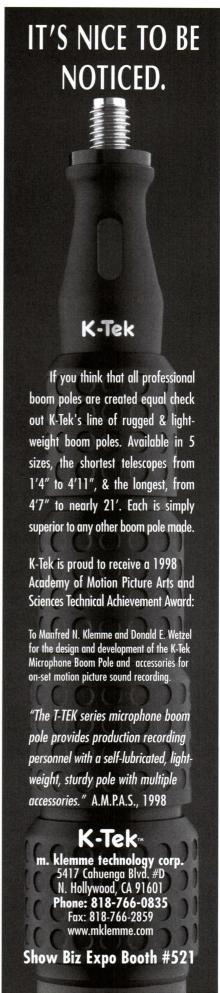
we encountered on this shoot."

Indeed, the crew confronted a helicopter with a 36'-diameter rotor blade circling in every direction around a speeding catamaran that was doing 20 to 25 knots. The filmmakers were fully aware of the risks, but they knew how to manage the situation. "All aviation decisions are made by Cliff," says Goodman. "Photographic decisions are made by me, and I'm going to ask Cliff to give me camera positions that give me the most interesting images. Mischa was coordinating with the sailboat by radio and making sure that our concepts were in line with what John Sullivan and John McTiernan wanted."

With the exception of Brosnan, everyone on the catamaran was a professional sailor. "We would ask them to take up a heading that would hike the pontoon out of the water at speed, and they would hold the heading," explains Goodman. "After the first few times, you know what angles work best. Then it's just a matter of trying to reposition the boat for the best light and reflections on the water.

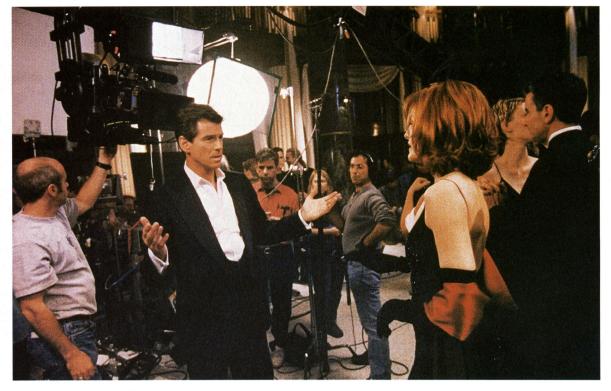
"But you have to take advantage of the moment, getting low and getting those tight shots on Pierce [who was on loan from the first unit for the waterbound sequence]. We'd also shoot from the top of the mast, putting the mast in foreground as we aimed almost straight down at him.

"It was really a great example teamwork, because in many instances, the camera on the helicopter was far below Pierce's level when the boat was hiked. We understand that 95 percent of the material they used in the ocean sequences is helicopter work [as opposed to footage shot from a chase boat], even though the camera is looking up most of the time. That shows how close and how low we were. It takes a lot of adrenaline and attention from everyone to get that type of positioning."



Smooth Operator

Actors
Brosnan and
Russo ready
themselves on
the set. Note
China ball to
left of camera
and the
eyelight directly
above the lens.



several 1K or 2K nook lights shining down through 216 paper. For the Met set, the production designer actually cut a hole in the roof to create a large skylight. Then, for my lighting purposes, we covered this 20' by 20' skylight with a 40' by 40' tent that we erected on the roof. I had the inside of the tent painted white, and positioned about 12 Maxi-Brutes around the perimeter to provide an ambient bounce of 'skylight' - when we looked up at the 'sky,' we only saw white. We then directed about four 20Ks down for some direct sunlight. The problem was that in a museum, you'd never have any direct sunlight hitting any of the artwork, so we kept the 20Ks off the walls. Additionally, we fitted some fluorescent lights — 3200°K Kino Flo tubes — up in a cove around the ceiling of the sets as well. The entire set was then rigged to about 1,500 dimmer channels."

The Thomas Crown Affair begins with Brosnan's character executing the cunning theft of a precious Monet painting from the Met. Details Priestly, "Crown hires four guys to attempt to break into the Met and steal some paintings. These guys are destined to be caught because they're not too smart, but he's merely using them to gain entry into the main hall so that he can steal the painting he wants. When they trip the alarm, some steel security gates come down and emergency alarm-lights come on. Pierce then steals the Monet and slips under one of the gates, which he's blocked off with a briefcase. The four guys are arrested, but of course there's still a painting missing. When the police detective, Michael McCann [Denis Leary], tries to reenact the burglary, he inspects the gate, which is still blocked by the briefcase. This is where we first meet Rene Russo's character. As Denis bends down to look at the briefcase. we switch to his point of view as Rene's leg steps into the frame. We follow up her stocking, catch a glimpse of her garter belt and then reveal that it's Rene.

"We shot the investigation scene with police-type construction lights, and we aimed them toward the camera so we'd get flares in the lens for every shot," recounts the cinematographer. "Every time we cut to a different angle, there'd be a flare in the lens, which gave the scene a great dramatic quality. The scene takes place at night, so I played it very moody and dark. I took the overhead lighting that we used for daylight way down for some ambiance, and then used the practical lights to light the actors and put flares into the lens — with only a little help from fill light [generated] from the camera [position]."

Several sequences take place in the characters' various homes, where Priestly continued his soft, naturalistic lighting scheme. "We also shot their apartments on stages," he notes. "Again we used very soft, overhead light from soft-boxes, as well as very soft source light coming through windows. That lighting was usually generated by 20Ks bounced off of large beadboards that were brought very close to the windows, creating a very soft but still slightly directional source. I then used some Chimeras to fill in

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Smooth Operator

Brosnan and McTiernan block out a shot with a Technocrane while shooting on the streets of New York.

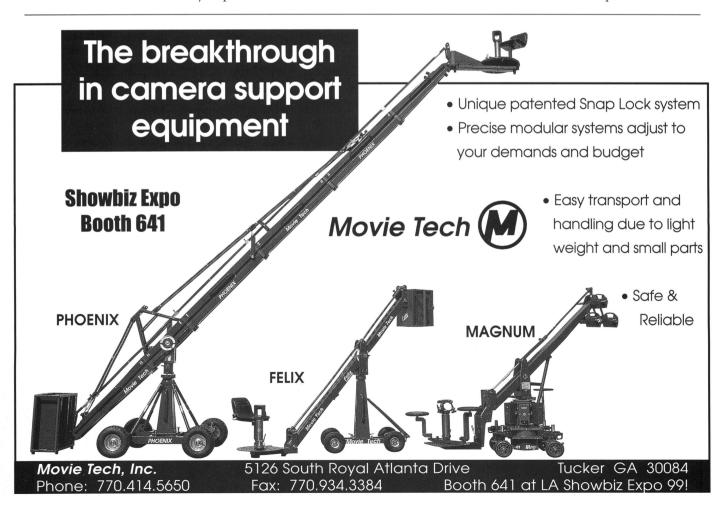


the interior as necessary. In general, I tried to maintain a hard rim light
— motivated by a practical or a

window in the background — and then add a minimal amount of fill for a more dramatic ratio.

"In certain situations where Rene was in the scene," he expands, "I tried to use a bit of warmth like a 1/4 CTO or CTS in her key light — to lift her face out from the rest of the background. Her face responded to that fantastically, and she looked great. For Rene, I usually used some sort of doubled diffusion - like 4' by 4' frames of 216 or 250 — with a Chimera or a China ball. China balls are great lighting instruments for women, and I try to use them whenever I can. They give off a very soft, even light. The problem with China balls is that they're hard to control. When I had close-up on Rene, we'd bring one in as close as possible to accentuate the falloff."

The only sequence not shot on the East Coast takes place in the tropics, where Crown and Catherine enjoy a romantic interlude. For this sequence, the production moved down to Martinique for a little over

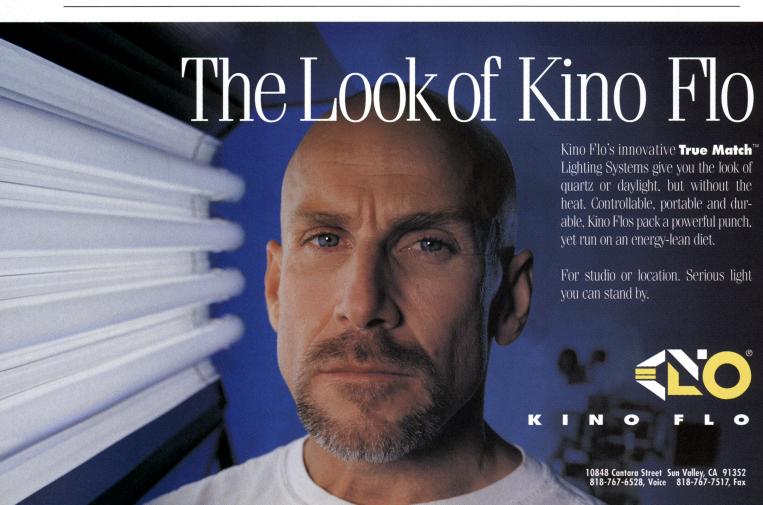


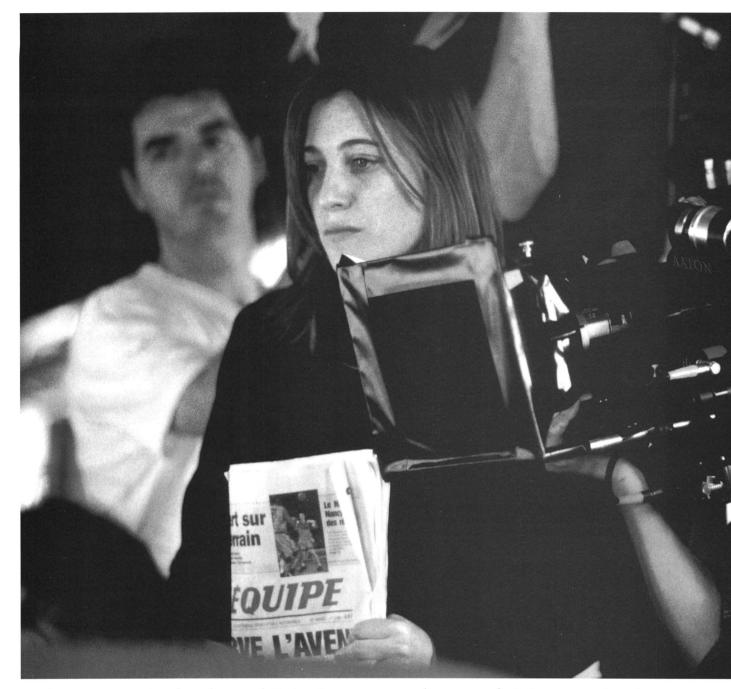
a week of interior and exterior location photography. Notes Priestly, "We didn't have much time there, because Pierce had to go off to do the new James Bond movie [The World Is Not Enough]. We had to get the scenes finished very quickly, but the location we went to every day was an hour and a half away, and it rained on us every seven minutes. We literally had to work between the raindrops and the clouds, and yet still try to tell a story. It really was hell down there, but despite all the chaos and pressure to finish the film, some wonderful and beautiful scenes evolved. In that situation, the environment really dictates the lighting. When you have a very bright exterior and you're shooting from the interior and then going out into the exterior, you really have to apply some very powerful lighting — large HMIs — to balance things out. It could be a T32 outside and a

T2.8 inside."

Priestly is currently on location in North Carolina shooting Mary Jane's Last Dance, which is being directed by 25-year-old firsttimer Zoe Clarke-Williams. The cinematographer notes that he considers each new project to be unique, and doesn't use other films as a reference for his current projects. "I think every film has its own life. We've all watched a number of films in our lifetime, and a lot of us have worked on films for years, so you bring a little bit of knowledge from each film. But when you start your own project, every aspect of your project takes on its own life. When you go to a location, you learn something about the film from that, and when you watch the actors, you learn something from their movements. You also study the script and talk with the director, so it's an evolving process.

"I don't wish to copy other films," he concludes, "but we're often victims of our own experiences. We tend to mimic some of the things we've done before, but only because they've worked so well for us. At any rate, there really is no shot that you can do now that someone hasn't already done before. As a cinematographer, I'm a great believer in the idea that the actors will lead you part of the way in lighting them. The locations will lead you another part of the way, and your own thoughts and experiences will take you the rest of the way. That's how I try to approach my work. Obviously, if I have a chance to see a set ahead of time, that's fine, because you may have a better chance at 'nailing' it. Sometimes, though, spontaneity spurs great moments."





Valeria Bruni-Tedeschi and Eric Gautier on the set of "Ceux qui m'aiment

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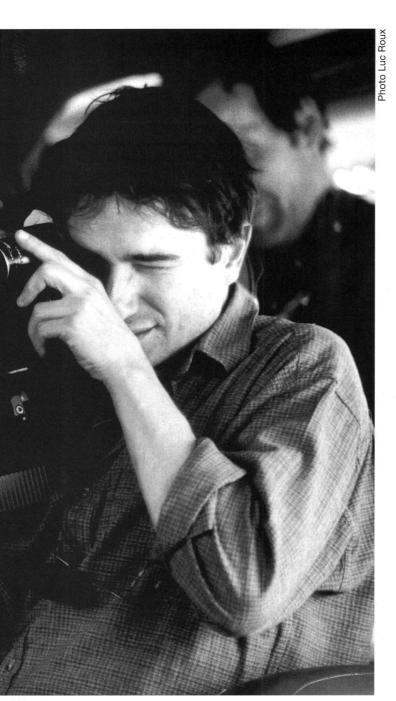
A lightweight camera to crouch, sit or run between actors with. Full 90° rotations for reverse shots without destabilizing the operator. A Super 16 camera basically... but recording 35 anamorphic!

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Eric Gautier

* "Those who love me can take the train", a film by Patrice Chéreau.

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IAward-Worthy Inage S

The ASC and the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences applaud 1998's top feature-film cinematographers.

by Christopher Probst

ast year proved to be one of cinematic diversity and audacious visual execution. Each of the six feature films nominated for Best Cinematography by either the American Society of Cinematographers or the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences offered a unique feast of images that dazzled, shocked and seduced audiences into their film's respective realities.

Few could dispute the effectiveness of the frenetic visual barrage that Steven Spielberg and cinematographer Janusz Kaminski, ASC created in depicting the 1944 D-Day landing at Normandy in *Saving Private Ryan* (see *AC* Aug. and Dec. '98). In turn, Terrence Malick and John Toll, ASC illustrated the psychological effects of war with *The Thin Red Line's* poetic account of the 1942 battle for Guadalcanal in the South Pacific (*AC* Feb. '99).



The Elizabethan era was on display in director Shekhar Kapur's *Elizabeth* (see Production Slate Dec. '98), a lush account of Queen Elizabeth's rise to power that was boldly photographed by Remi Adefarasin, BSC. The more fanciful aspects of the period were highlighted by John Madden and Richard Greatrex, BSC in Academy Best Picture winner *Shakespeare in Love*.

The drama of the modern world was well-represented by Steven Zaillian and Conrad Hall, ASC in *A Civil Action (AC Jan. '99)*, which used subtle imagery to illustrate the tragedy an environmental

catastrophe, and by Robert Redford and Robert Richardson, ASC in the sweeping dramatic film *The Horse Whisperer*, which depicts a family's process of spiritual healing.

Since AC has already offered extensive coverage of four of these six nominated works (which can be referenced in the aforementioned back issues or on the ASC Website at www.cinematographer.com), we have herein allotted extra space to Shakespeare in Love and The Horse Whisperer.

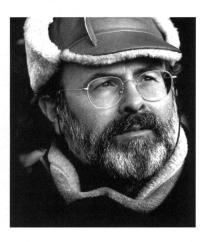
* Academy Award winner

** ASC Award winner

Richard Greatrex, BSC Shakespeare in Love

Shakespeare in Love claimed a lion's share of 1998's critical kudos: seven Academy Awards (including the coveted Best Picture prize), four BAFTA Awards, three Golden Globes and a score of critics' awards.

The charming and romantic Elizabethan-era romp, directed by John Madden and photographed by Richard Greatrex, BSC, cleverly interweaves the Bard's *Romeo and Juliet* into its narrative, which deftly skips back and forth between comedic interludes and moments of Shakespearean drama. This fanciful blend provides a showcase for Joseph Fiennes, who stars as William



Shakespeare, and Best Actress winner Gwyneth Paltrow as his love interest, Viola De Lesseps.

The film's success has also brought Greatrex his fair share of recognition. The cinematographer was nominated for ASC, Academy, BAFTA and Golden Satellite Awards.

A 1980 graduate of England's National Film School, Greatrex began his career by working in the emerging music-video arena with fellow classmate and director Julien Temple. He recalls, "You didn't need to be an expert. They just wanted you to work for very little and have lots of zany ideas, and we didn't have any trouble with that. We saw music videos as little three-minute stories,

which conincidentally had to be set to music. It was virgin territory for us, and we made up the ideas as we went along. We were fortunate that we were able to dive into the industry, albeit a little sideways, and not have to serve our apprenticeships in quite the same way [as our contemporary peers]."

After experimenting with a wide range of looks and techniques on music videos, Greatrex was then able to move into the narrative television market on Britain's Channel 4. Since then, the cinematographer has compiled a body of work that includes the features Blue Juice, War Requiem, A Foreign Field, For Queen and Country and Mrs. Brown, and the television titles True Tilda, Tess of the D'Urbervilles and Getting Hurt. Greatrex won a BAFTA Award last year for the telefilm The Woman in White, and received a prior BAFTA nomination for Truth or Dare, which was directed by Shakespeare helmsman Madden. Greatrex recently completed location work in England and the Czech Republic for the BBC film Peacekeeper, which depicts the war in Bosnia.

Greatrex began his relationship with Madden on the BBC drama Meat. The cinematographer remembers, "John was looking for a cameraman and my agent got a copy of the script, which was a tough story about a young man who comes from the north British Isles to London and ends up on the streets as a rent boy. I've now done four films with John, and one of the best things about our relationship is that he's quite adventurous in the way he uses the camera. He always demands more and more difficult things. And because demands are being made of you, you can't just sit back. That type of situation really pushes what you know, and you realize that you're learning and moving forward all the time."

In devising a visual style for *Shakespeare in Love*, Greatrex and Madden wanted to steer clear of the

film's obvious theatrical roots. "The script had the potential to be highly theatrical," explains Greatrex. "It was set in a theater, and it was about theater people. We could have easily gone to town with the theatricality of the visuals. However, we decided early on that we would do the opposite and try to be a bit non-theatrical in our approach to the look. Because the story was theatrical, we wanted to ground the look in reality as much as we could. If a scene took place in a room with small windows, for instance, we'd light it as if it was a room with small windows. Additionally, we also wanted the film's look to be a bit gentle, so we tried to avoid making big, sweeping statements with the lighting or the camera. We tried to let the scenes happen without having the visuals comment on what was happening or imposing some idea on top of it.

"These ideas very much dictated the lighting approach," he adds. "John wanted us to constantly be in touch with the leading players. He is very keen on seeing people's faces and seeing into their eyes; he feels that it helps the definition of their characters. Therefore, I always made sure that you could see people's eyes and that they weren't falling away into darkness. Accordingly, I went even more in the direction of softness with the lighting [than I had in the past]. Obviously, the larger the source, the softer the light is going to be, and the more it will wrap around things. Thankfully, the sets and the locations really allowed that type of approach, because they were bigger than we are generally used to. John and I have shot an awful lot in rooms that are eight feet by 12 feet. It was a very pleasant change to shoot in big environments."

This soft but directional lighting became the foundation of Greatrex's lighting scheme. "Most of the key light in the vast majority of the locations, except for maybe some of the bedrooms, was an eight-foot-

Award-Worthy Images

square light source," reveals Greatrex. "I often used the largest Chimera available [a Senior lightbank], which I had adapted to a six-light Maxi-Brute. We then placed an 8' by 8' half gridcloth frame in front of that. I'd usually have the frame at some distance from the Chimera, so the [resulting light from the gridcloth frame] was really the softest of sources. I hadn't used the half gridcloth before, but my gaffer, Steve Costello, showed it to me, and I loved the way the it diffused the light and spread it around. One of the tricks about having all of this soft light is that you still have to keep its directionality, so we were often coming in with great big cutters to knock it down off the background. I'm sure Gwyneth [Paltrow] was wondering what the hell I was doing with this great big box next to her all the time, but I think that approach benefitted the way she looked in the film."

Shot in England, Shakespeare was composed in the Super 35 format, primarily on Kodak Vision 500T 5279 stock -- although Greatrex initially began shooting with the 200T 5274. "With the 200T," he recalls, "I felt that the rushes coming back were a little bit too contrasty for me, even given the kinds of soft sources I was using. I quickly switched to Vision 500T, which slackened up the contrast some. For instance, Joseph Fiennes wore a green jerkin for a lot of the picture, and with the 200T, it tended to go towards black a bit. When we switched to the 500T, we could just get a little more detail out of the shadows.

"John very much wanted to use the widescreen 2.35:1 aspect ratio," he continues. "I didn't want to shoot it in anamorphic, though, because I was concerned about several things. First, I needed to keep the camera as flexible as I could. John has a lot of very complex camera moves, and I was concerned about the focus and the bulkiness of the

anamorphic lenses. Second, I wanted to keep the candles and the practical sources looking as bright as I could. Shooting at a T4 or T5.6 with anamorphic lenses wouldn't help that any. Using spherical lenses at a T2 enabled the candles to look decently hot in the frame, so that pretty much dictated the choice of the Super 35 format. I had never shot anything in Super 35, and I must admit that I was nervous. I talked to a lot fellow cameramen who had worked in the medium, and I couldn't find many people who would say bad things about it, so I tried to be less nervous. However, I was extra diligent that we had a good, strong, healthy negative, and I went to rushes at the lab every morning to make sure that it was all working in terms of the exposure and balance.

"I also shot the whole film without any diffusion, because I was very concerned to keep the quality of the negative as pristine as possible for the anamorphic squeezing of the prints. In fact, I was constantly assuring people not to reorder prints to try to protect the negative and reduce its handling. I was very pleased with Deluxe Laboratories [in England]. They got six of the seven reels exactly right on the first timing."

Greatrex utilized an Arriflex 535B body, acquired from Arri-Media, which he outfitted with a set of Zeiss primes, as well as Arri's three Variable Prime lenses. He notes, "I mainly used the Variable Primes, which I thought were wonderful; I loved the look of them. They're a little bit softer than straight Zeiss lenses. Also, they gave us that extra bit of flexibility that John's demands required. For instance, if you wanted to get a little bit tighter on the track, but you hadn't built it in, you could just ease the Variable Prime in. The Variable Primes have a terrific range, and I've noticed that Arris has introduced a longer Variable Prime as well. With four of them, you really wouldn't need any other lenses, apart for some fast lenses for night work.

"John tends to like slightly longer lenses because they make the backgrounds swing nicely, which he's very keen on. He also using the word visceral when talking about the visuals. He likes things to be dynamic, so the focal lengths tended to be a bit longer. If we thought the natural length for a specific shot would be a 35mm, sure enough, the lens we used would be a 50mm. We were always squeezing things a bit. That's one of the aspects we've developed in our work — figuring out what longer lenses can do, and how they can help you reveal an environment without just slapping the big wide lens on."

A substantial portion of Shakespeare takes place on two of the film's theater stages, either during rehearsals or performances. In researching the architecture and lighting of the period, the filmmakers sought to adhere to the actual conditions the Bard himself would have experienced in the locales. "It was very important for us to try convey the reality of those theaters, which were largely outdoor places," says Greatrex. "Inside, when you looked straight up — which we do in the opening sequence — you realize that they're open to the sky. Therefore, John wanted it to feel as if natural daylight was lighting the audience and the folks on the stage. I was very pleased with that idea, but that did mean that we had to have a hell of a lot of light up over the top. There's a line in Henry V where Shakespeare calls the theater a 'Wooden O.' That obviously describes what the theater was basically a ring of walls that were open to the sky. We wanted to keep the roof of our set open straight up, because we were craning up and down a lot — I couldn't just put a silk straight over the top. We had a big, donut-like circle of 12' by 12' halfgrid frames, and I don't know how many Dinos, around the top perimeter. Each light was individually Twentieth Century Fox proudly congratulates

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switched on a dimmer board so that I could key a little bit from one side or the other, rather than having the light becoming too toppy. We then would key-up individuals or groups within the 'O' with our Chimera Maxis.

"The theater set was built on Stage K at Shepperton Studios," he expands. "Rather wonderfully, it was an almost life-size replica of the Rose Theater. Interestingly, the sets were made with the type of wood used in the original place. All of the interior beams were made with solid oak, which gave the sets a wonderful reality. In fact, it was so real that Judi Dench [who portrayed Queen Elizabeth] asked for the set at the end of the film. She's having it put up in a warehouse in London so that Shakespearean plays can be staged in this original setting."

A significant portion of the film takes place in the two lead characters' bedrooms. "I tried to stick to what our research said about the light sources of the period," Greatrex says. "For instance, the Elizabethans had only just discovered glass as a domestic product, but it was hugely expensive. Their windows therefore tended to be smaller unless they were very rich people. Will's garret had only a tiny little window, because he really couldn't afford the glass.

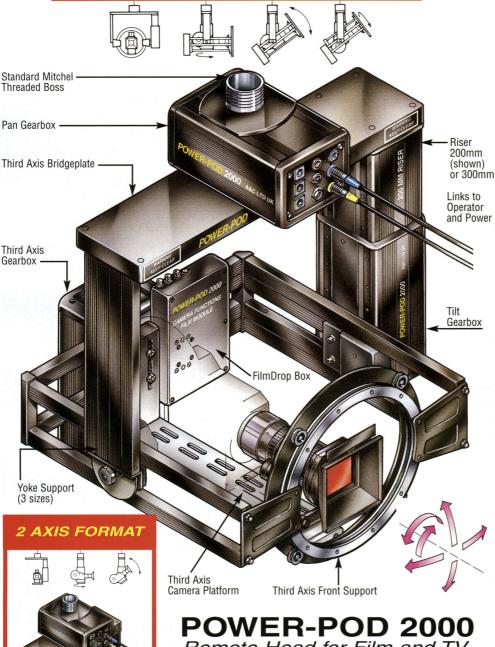
"We also used a lot of candles and lanterns that were correct for the period. Still, I try not to be too fundamentalist about ideas of sticking to certain sources. For instance, I try to keep the candles looking as if they're doing something in the lighting scheme, but I don't stick religiously to it. I just try to make sure that they figure into the scene if they're supposed to be the lighting source. Obviously, having a large, wrapping soft source in Gwyneth's bedroom is a complete cheat from anything that a candle would give you. A candle is actually a very hard source, because it's so small and from one point. In the end, you just ignore that type of thinking, though, because there's absolutely no point in putting hard shadows all over Gwyneth Paltrow's wonderful face! That's what a candle would actually do. Instead, we'd put the candles in the frame to establish them as a light source, and then shoot as wide open as possible to make them look as bright as possible. We'd then cheat in our actual 'lighting' from there."

In this way, the love scene between Shakespeare and Viola utilized "candles" as a motivated source, but was actually lit with a range of Chimera sources encircling the actors. Greatrex reveals, "I had them all on dimmers that I brought up and took down while we dollied around Gwyneth and Joseph."

While much of the film was executed on stages, the production did visit several landmark locations in England. "The big dance scene in the film takes place in an original Elizabethan castle in Oxfordshire called Broughton Castle," Greatrex notes. "Broughton is relatively unique in that it hasn't been taken over by any of the institutions that tend to look after those older historical places; it's still owned by the aristocratic family that probably owned it in Elizabethan times, and it was completely unchanged.

"Naturally, we weren't allowed to rig anything in the ballroom. In fact, for that scene, we had a big overhead rig — like a truss system, but built with single [speedrail] scaffold tubes — that was held up with several upright poles that we hid behind big drapes. [Production designer] Martin Childs and I worked together to figure out how we could have drapes coming down, or build columns around the tube legs to disguise our rigs. I've done enough period projects to know that you can never [attach] anything to the fabric of the building, but when you're working with John you have to be prepared to look anywhere. We had to create a rig that would enable

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us to turn 360 degrees, which we did all the time. We were ready to light from any angle, and had everything rigged to dimmers. During the dancing, there were a lot of circular camera movements, so once again I had overhead Chimeras — in this case, 2K blondes through medium Chimeras — mounted on a rig, and we brought [the lights] up and down as the actors turned around.

"There's a misnomer that it's more difficult to light a big space," he states, "but I actually find it easier to light a big space because you've got room in which to put things, and you can get your lamps back so you don't feel the source as much. You've got room to let the light be more even across the space that you're using. The Inverse Square Law begins to works for you."

Shakespeare in Love's exteriors were primarily shot on backlot sets at Shepperton, although a crucial riverbank sequence was photographed on a stretch of the Thames in Barnes. "We had all of the shops that ran between the theaters, and around the market, built at Shepperton," Greatrex explains. "We were generally blessed with a overcast skies that suited what we had done with the interior of the Rose Theater. We had a couple of sunny days, but I was able to knock down [the sunlight] with 20' by 20' overhead silks. All of the river sequence was shot on a stretch of the Thames that we dressed." This daylight scene was then augmented with computer-generated backgrounds of Eliza-bethan London to sell the 16th-century setting.

Similarly, for a riverbound night scene in the boats, Greatrex elected to shoot the sequence on a greenscreen tank stage. He notes that the Shepperton-based Magic Camera Company was instrumental in achieving believability for the sequence. "It's amazing what they can do," Greatrex says. "In the old days, you had to lock off the camera and worry about what was moving

across the matte lines, or other things like that. Now, they can seemingly get away with anything, with different matting and a bit of fudging on the computer. Those techniques get easier and easier for cameramen once they understand some basic rules."

Greatrex's camera crew on the show consisted of camera operator Philip Sindall, focus puller Brad clapper/loader Larner, Rutherford and trainee Kirsty Argyle. "I'm fairly pleased with everything we did," Greatrex concludes. "When people say they like the simplicity of Shakespeare in Love, I'm very pleased, because that's what I was aiming for. Usually, when you see the finished results of your work for the first time, there are some 'flinch' moments for you as a cameraman. You think, 'Oh God, why didn't I do such and such?' or 'That could have been better.' But there aren't too many flinch moments in Shakespeare. I'm able to watch it as a film, which is very pleasant."

Robert Richardson, ASC The Horse Whisperer

"The term 'horse whispering' is a kind of euphemism for a relationship between a human and a horse," filmmaker Robert Redford has said of his picture's somewhat mysterious premise, which was based on the popular novel by Nicholas Evans. "It is simply a way to be with horses that sends a message of understanding and compassion. Instead of beating a horse into submission, or using punishment as a tool, horse whispering is a way of developing trust and understanding. If you want the horse to do something, you begin by letting the horse know that it's okay to be a horse — not your version of what you think you need from the animal."

The Horse Whisperer focuses on the confusion and complex interpersonal dysfunction the MacLean family must endure when their daughter, Grace (Scarlett Johansson) is crippled in a riding accident that kills the young girl's best friend and severely traumatizes her horse. In seeking to repair her tattered bond with her daughter, Grace's mother, Annie (Kristen Scott Thomas) decides to take their emotionally scarred horse to a man with the uncanny ability to heal such animals.

The film was shot on location in and around New York and on the Engle Ranch near Livingston, Montana. Although Michael Ballhaus, ASC (Redford's collaborator on the critically acclaimed Quiz Show) was originally slated to shoot The Horse Whisperer, the cinematographer was forced to leave the production when a delay caused a scheduling conflict. Redford, who was serving for the first time as both director and star (in addition to producing the film) subsequently sought out another accomplished director of photography, Robert Richardson, ASC.

Richardson won the Academy Award in 1991 for JFK, and earned his fifth ASC Award nomination for The Horse Whisperer — which also garnered Best Cinematography nominations from the BSC and the Chicago Film Critics' Association. His other ASC-nominated works are JFK, Born on the Fourth of July, A Few Good Men and Heaven & Earth. Richardson has received other Oscar nominations for Platoon (which also earned an him an Independent Spirit Award, as well as a BAFTA Award nomination) and Born on the Fourth of July, as well as a 1988 Spirit Award nomination for Talk Radio. The cinematographer's additional credits include such visually-rich films as Salvador, Eight Men Out, Wall Street, City of Hope, The Doors, Natural Born Killers, Casino, Nixon, U-Turn and Wag the Dog. He recently completed Snow Falling on Cedars for director Scott Hicks, and Bringing Out the Dead for Martin Scorsese.

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Released last bv May Touchstone pictures, The Horse Whisperer features two distinct narrative elements which, in turn, define the film's two primary visual treatments. "When the story begins," Redford has explained, "the relationship between Annie and Grace is particularly dysfunctional. Grace's condition [after her accident] dramatically drives the whole piece and is central to the story. The visual style of the film played a huge role in the making of The Horse Whisperer. The visual aspect is very important to me, because I was an artist; I originally started out in life to be a painter. In fact, I've seen the world through that [artist's] 'lens' all of my life. The first time I directed, it actually caught me by surprise that I was suddenly putting that sense of spatial formation and control within a frame to use. I had thought that part of my life was behind me, but it wasn't. I was quite happy to rediscover it, and it's one of the real joys of directing. However, [as a filmmaker] I don't want to put it out there and brandish it or headline it. You want to make the visual construction of the film seamless so that the audience will be able to experience something and feel it, rather than feeling urged to comment on it."

Adds Richardson, "With Bob [Redford's] background in design, a lot of the initial discussions about the look of the film were more designoriented. He came to me with the basic spine [of the visuals]. He felt that the look should be claustrophobic and cool in New York; then, as we moved from the East to the West, the framing would expand and become more lush. With the entrance of Tom Booker, Bob's character in the film, everything turns golden. Those ideas

immediately opened us up to the use of the anamorphic format."

Redford has stated, "I have very strong feelings about the visual elements of film, so having a cinematographer who understands me is the most important thing to achieve the scale that I want to work on in my films. Robert Richardson and I spent a lot of time on the visual design of this film. We discussed the light and dark, chiaroscuro, silhouettes, and so on. We especially discussed the darkness of the Manhattan part of the film, where the urban winter environment closes things in — as do the



lives of these people — which automatically compresses the frame."

"We tended to work with a more aggressive camera style and with longer lenses on the East Coast than we did on the Montana portion of the film," says Richardson. "The initial discussion for all of New York scenes was that were going to [optically] blend a black-and-white intermediate with a color intermediate for the [first two reels, to desaturate all of that portion of the film]. Later, Bob decided against that idea, so we ended up making those scenes which I had shot with 81 and 81EF filters instead of a standard 85 — in cooler hues. Once we found our way to Montana and the influence of Montana settled in on the film, the camera settled down to a large degree and became less active — except for certain scenes with Annie, who brought some of the East Coast's

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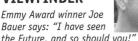
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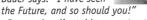


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energy with her."

To further differentiate the visual contrast between the two disparate worlds of East Coast New York and the sprawling vistas of Montana, the filmmakers devised a simple yet effective method of adding more "scope" to narrative backdrops. As Redford has revealed, "I'm not sure everybody is aware of it, but the film actually starts out matted in a 1.85:1 aspect ratio. But as [Annie and Grace] drive across the country, the perspective opens to a full 2:35:1 matte, which is somewhat disguised by a cut with rain on a windshield, so you don't actually see the aspect ratio shifting. It's more of a subliminal effect, creating a wideframe vista like I remember from [older] movies I've loved. Robert Richardson and I spent a fair amount of time up front discussing the concept of the use of light and compression. As the seasons changed and the space opened to the West, we included more light and color."

Expands Richardson, "To help create the sense of an expanded frame, we also incorporated aerial photography for the characters' journey west. I had used SpaceCams and similar types of equipment a couple of times, but on this film I decided to use that type of tool in a more abstract manner. Bob had the idea to see these large environments as if they were extraordinarily small environments, almost making it difficult to differentiate between whether you were looking at some sort of macro shot or an extremely wide vista shot."

Richard photographed The Horse Whisperer on Eastman Kodak EXR 5248 and 5293 stocks, utilizing the 100 ASA film for much of the film's day exteriors and the 200 ASA for the remaining interiors and night sequences. The film also features some incredible second-unit imagery provided by Paul Ryan, ASC (who had done similar duty on Redford's A River Runs Through It) and Philip Pfeiffer, who worked on the scenes set in Saratoga Springs, New York. "We shot the entire film with Panavision Platinum cameras and Eseries anamorphic lenses," says Richardson. "The [1.85:1] side masks - basically just two black bars laid down on both edges - were created in post. We just composed for the 1.85 frame for the first parts of the

The film's harrowing opening accident posed several challenges to the filmmakers. The sequence was shot on location during the early spring of '97 in Saratoga — one of the few locations in the region where sparse patches of snow still clung to the ground from the uncommonly warm winter. The scene features a jarring collision between the two young girls on horseback as a semi truck suddenly appears from around a corner in front of them and begins to slide out of control in an effort to evade them helpless duo. "That sequence was one of the most difficult in the film," states Richardson, "and it required great choreography. Michael Ballhaus had originally been involved with Bob a year prior to our shooting, and the two of them had choreographed the first vision of that accident. When I came aboard the film, I added my input. As the sequence essentially grew, the degree of difficulty involved in capturing the sequence, at the level that Bob was expecting, became much clearer."

To begin with, the production had to "dress" the hilly landscape with snow, using shaved ice in the foregrounds and large areas of highexpansion foam for the backgrounds. Additionally, the filmmakers had snow-making units standing by to create live snow falling through frame. Expertly trained horses, under the guidance of renowned Hollywood trainer Rex Peterson, were utilized in the filming of the scene. The filmmakers also used several prop and mechanical horses as well; through the use of some clever cutting, the material meshed

Kees Van Oostrum ASC has shot mostly with Primos, but also with all the Zeiss lenses and now with the Cookes. Here's what he thinks:

hen I began working as a DP, it was in Hollywood. I started out with Panaflexes and used nothing else for twelve years," says Kees Van Oostrum.

"Then I was hired, in 1996, to shoot a *Profiler* pilot that called for several mid-shot speed changes. I decided to go with the Arriflex 535, because it would be able to hold exposure when we varied speed."

"When shooting began, I saw that the 535's finder was a big improvement. And with the Moviecam SL for hand-held and Steadicam, I found the whole system comfortable – a winner. But the lenses weren't what I was used to."

"Right after that pilot, which we shot with Zeiss Superspeeds, I worked on *The Old Man*, a feature based on the Faulkner novel. I stayed with the 535 system; and we used selected Zeiss Standards."

"I was then hired to shoot the rest of the year's *Profiler*. The new Zeiss Variable Primes had just become available, so we tried a set of those on our first episode. They were excellent. For the rest of the series, that's what we shot with."



Kees Van Oostrum ASC NSC

"As we were finishing that series, the first set of Cooke primes arrived in Hollywood. I was able to borrow them for a day and use them on a couple of *Profiler* scenes.

They were superb – all I had been hoping for. And the 50mm, for example, weighed only 3.3 pounds – not front-heavy on a Moviecam SL. So we could use our A camera lenses for hand-held."

"Since then, I've used the Cookes to shoot a Fox feature *Next to*You and a Turner film You Know
My Name, which we decided to bleach-pull. It's about an oil town in the Thirties, so we wanted a period look but with strong blacks."

"Bleach-pulling the final print desaturates the color and intensifies the blacks, but it also adds contrast. On previous bleach-pull jobs, I sometimes had to put a low-contrast filter on the camera. But not with the Cookes."

"The least contrasty of the Zeiss lenses were the Variable Primes. But even with those, we sometimes had to use Promist, which compromised their sharpness."

"In fact, these Cookes may even be sharper than the Primos," says Mr Van Oostrum. "On screen, the Cookes are somewhat less contrasty in my A/B tests, yet both sets look comparably sharp. That suggests higher resolution in the Cookes. Certainly, their detail and subtlety are extraordinary. They are my first choice."

Mr Van Oostrum has won three Emmy nominations and four ASC Award nominations. His *Return To Lonesome Dove* won a 1993 ASC Award.









Award-Worthy Images

together seamlessly.

"This film provided me with the opportunity to show the West not only as it used to be as a way of life, but as it still is in very, very small pockets," Redford concluded. "It was interesting for me to focus on a family that still lives the way people lived 100 years ago. With today's filmmaking technology, there are all kinds of ways you can make anything look good with filters, optical treatments and so forth. The truth is that the real West is pretty powerful and quite beautiful just the way it is. I was more interested in trying to show it in a way that would make [the audience] feel it changing — to let the clouds come and go and color a scene accordingly."

Remi Adefarasin, BSC Elizabeth

Like many British cameramen, Remi Adefarasin began his career working for the BBC. For Elizabeth, Adefarasin earned a BAFTA Award for Best Cinematography, as well as nominations from the ASC and the Chicago Film Critics' Association. The cinematographer has also earned two BAFTA nominations for his BBC work, one for the miniseries Christabel and another for the telefilm Memento Mori. His other credits include the features Sliding Doors; Captives; Truly, Madly, Deeply; Hollow Reed; The Hummingbird Tree; and second-unit on The English Patient, as well as the television projects Children Crossing, Great Moments in Aviation, Human Bomb, Shoot for the Sun, and the mini-series The Buccaneers. Adefarasin recently completed the features Eugene Onegin and The Arabian Nights.

"We wanted to try to give *Elizabeth* a very modern look," Adefarasin says. "That's quite difficult on a film where the characters are in period costumes. We didn't want to make a stuffy historical movie; we wanted to give the picture

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a fresh look, without making it look as if it was happening right now in modern times. Elizabeth still is set in the past, so it's not like Romeo + Juliet - which had modern cars, swimming pools and guns. We had all of the right [design elements] from the period, yet the film techniques we used were modern. [Director Shekhar Kapur] had very specific ideas regarding the idea that a snake is like a conspirator. In line with that idea, we had the camera moving in very serpentine ways at the beginning of the movie. We had lots of high vantage points, looking down on the Queen, as well as quite a lot of shots that snuck around columns and spied on her. Toward the end of the film, however, the camera became more reverential, more static and at the Queen's level."

This modern aesthetic continued with the design of the lighting for the film's intricate plot. "We wanted to get lot of variety into the look of the lighting," he explains. "We didn't want to have one continuous look. Different scenes were allowed to have different vibrancies. We still had to keep the look within an overall style, which we wanted to be dark and dingy, but not so dark that it got annoying. I tried to find any reason to shoot through glass, sheer nets, fabrics, flames or anything bizarre to give a slightly different impression that would diffract the image or



break it down so that it wasn't too crystal-clear. I think when you see an image that is too clear and well-defined, your brain stops you from really looking at it, whereas you become more interested if it's held back a bit — you're more interested in figuring it out. Shekhar is a very competent director. He was brave with his imagery, and he knew that the audience would go with it."

Conrad L. Hall, ASC A Civil Action

A Civil Action is Conrad Hall's second film with director Steven Zaillian. The duo had previously collaborated on Searching for Bobby Fischer, which earned Hall his second ASC Award. He had earned a prior ASC nod in 1988 for his stylish photography on Robert Towne's Tequila Sunrise, as well as a 1994 ASC nomination for Love Affair.

Additionally, Hall was the 1993 recipient of the ASC Lifetime Achievement Award. A Civil Action marks the cinematographer's eighth Oscar nomination. He won the award in 1969 for Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid, and also earned nominations for Morituri, The Professionals, In Cold Blood, The Day of the Locust, Tequila Sunrise and Searching for Bobby Fischer. His other credits include Cool Hand Luke, Marathon Man, Class Action, Jennifer Eight and the upcoming American Beauty, starring Annette Bening.

"The idea in any craft," says Hall, "is to stay contemporary with society. Your audience is not a bunch of old fogies. There are young people coming along all the time, and these are the people you are telling stories to. You have to adapt your style to find ways that will best fit whatever film you're telling. You can't let your feet get stuck in the cement with certain techniques or ideas; you have to keep moving ahead."

Still going strong at 74 years of age, Hall remains passionate about his work. He attributes this fierce tenacity to his devotion to the script, and to his goal of telling good stories. However, he warns that this ambition can have its difficulties. "Ouite often, the cinematographer is not privy to all of the changes that are made in a film for various reasons," he warns. "When he sees the film for the first time, it can be a gut-wrenching experience — even a devastating one. As a director of photography, you get very attached to the memory of what you did during the production. When elements are dropped or rearranged in the editing process, it can take a while before you look at the work as a member of the audience. In fact, the only time I've actually been pleased with a film the first time out was on Searching for Bobby Fischer. However, I will say that upon the second viewing of a given film, I try to stay more objective. The third time, it's easier still. By the time we

Elizabeth photo by Alex Bailey, courtesy of Gramercy Picture



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get to an answer print, I may not even remember what's missing from the picture, or why its absence had devastated me so much on that first viewing!"

*Janusz Kaminski, ASC Saving Private Ryan

The winner of this year's Academy Award, Janusz Kaminski, ASC also earned a 1994 Oscar — as well the BSC Award and an ASC Award nomination — for *Schindler's List*. Additionally, he was nominated for both Academy and ASC Awards last year for *Amistad*. Kaminski's frenetic camerawork on *Saving Private Ryan* has also garnered Best Cinematography awards from the Florida Film Critics Circle, the Boston

Society of Film Critics and the Los Angeles Film Critics Association, as well as nominations from the ASC, BAFTA, the Chicago Film Critics Association and the Golden Satellite Awards. Kaminski's other film credits include Jerry Maguire, Little Giants, How to Make an American Quilt, Tall Tale and The Lost World. He's currently completing postproduction on his directorial debut, Lost Souls, which was photographed by his former gaffer, Mauro Fiore.

Although Kaminski has enjoyed the praise of both his cinematographic peers and film critics, he remains wary of falling back on "battle-tested" methods that will assure such kudos. "You see some cinematographers falling into patterns," he says. "If you look at their



individual films, the work is brilliant. But when you see the same look movie after movie, it suddenly becomes very repetitive photographically. It's very easy to fall into that, because that look may be beautiful, it may serve the story, and there never is enough time during production. After all, you have to light the scene so that the director can come in and do his work. Automatically, we're servants to the schedule, the story and the director. We have to compromise the visuals every day in order to accommodate those three elements.

"Every cinematographer has his little tricks and styles that he can fall back on if he only has 15 minutes to light a scene. The bigger trap, though, is when you use a certain style, beautiful as it might be, in





right) photo courtesy of AMPAS ivil Action photos by David James (top), courtesy of Buena Vista Pictures. Saving



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AWARDS MAY COME



Above: The recipients of the Best Visual **Effects Academy Award** for What **Dreams May** Come (left to right): Joel Hyneck, **Nicholas Brooks, Stuart** Robertson and Kevin Mack. **Right: Two** images from What Dreams May Come, which featured extensive digital landscapes depicting various visions of the afterlife.





The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences selected the visual effects seen in director Vincent Ward's heart-wrenching fantasy What Dreams May Come as the most impressive of 1998. (See AC Nov. '98 or the ASC Web Site posting for that month for complete details on both the cinematography by Eduardo Serra, AFC and the effects work.) The extensive effects required to bring Ward's vision to life demanded the utmost from a cadre of companies, including Manex Visual Effects (formerly Mass.Illusions), Pacific Ocean Post, Digital Domain, Illusion Arts, CIS, and Cinema Production Services. Visual effects producer Ellen M. Somers worked with the representatives at each respective house, helping to keep the complex production on track and schedule. The digital artists were inspired by such classic painters as Claude Monet and Casper David Friedrich.

— David E. Williams

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movie after movie. It may look fantastic, and you may get applauded again and again, but it doesn't take you anywhere personally. It doesn't take the art of cinematography anywhere, or allow other cinematographers to be taken to another level because of your influence."

**John Toll, ASC
The Thin Red Line

The winner of this year's ASC Award for Outstanding Achievement in Cinematography, John Toll, ASC also has the rare distinction of receiving the Academy Award for Best Cinematography two consecutive years in a row. In 1995, he earned the Oscar for Legends of the Fall (which also received an ASC Award nomination); the following year, he won ASC, BATFA and Academy Awards for Braveheart. Additionally, Toll was nominated for a 1989 ASC Award for the television pilot of The Young Riders The director of photography collected numerous other awards and nominations for his work on The Thin Red Line, including honors from the New York Film Critics' Circle, the Chicago Film Critics Association and the Golden Satellite Awards. Toll's other credits include the pictures Wind, Jack and The Rainmaker, as well as the upcoming indie film Simpatico.

Toll did much of the operating on The Thin Red Line himself. "Half the job of cinematography is composition," he submits. "Certainly, my years as an operator improved my technique and my sense of composition, but I think that's only half our job. I've talked to directors who came out of the British system who have said that they felt restricted in America because they couldn't go off with the operator and set up shots. But why hire a cinematographer if you don't want him to be involved in determining what you shoot? As long as I'm the director of photography on my films, I'm going to set up the

shots. The lighting scheme has everything to do with what the frame lines are, and if you're not in control of your frame lines, you're not going to be able to do the kind of lighting you want to. That's not to say that my operators don't have an enormous amount of input — they do. I'm not looking for a robot to sit there and



I (top) photo by Chris Pizzello. Thin urtesy of 20th Century Fox.



turn wheels; having worked as an operator, I know how they can use their role to aid the director photography.

"As much as any film I've ever worked on," he concludes, "The Thin Red Line was about an idea — the idea that war, and not necessarily one side or the other, is the great evil. It isn't often that one gets to work on films of this nature, and I'm grateful that I had the opportunity to participate in making it."

Additional material for this piece was provided by Stephen Pizzello and Andrew O. Thompson.

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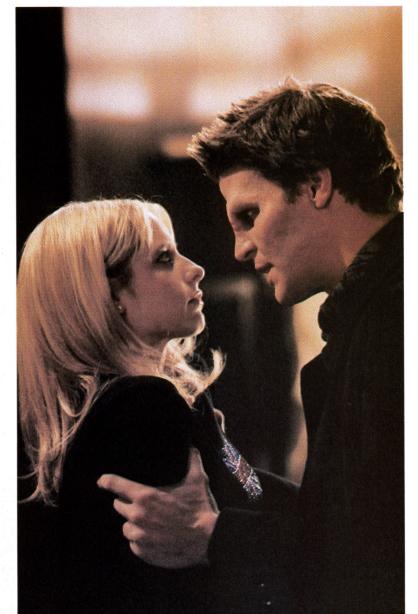
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Blows



Cinematographer Michael Gershman finds the right light for both a teenage heroine and evil hordes of the undead on the WB series *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*.

by Jean Oppenheimer

Photography by Byron J. Cohen and Richard Cartwright.

he great thing about *Buffy* is that there are absolutely no rules," declares director of photography Michael Gershman with delight. "Do I want to overexpose something five stops? Sure. Do I want to underexpose something to the point where you almost don't know it's there? Sure."

Gershman has served as director of photography on a half-dozen television series, but none of them allowed him the freedom he exercises every week on *Buffy the Vampire*



Slayer, the cult favorite that's about to enter its fourth season on the WB television network. "The nature of the [subject matter] gives me more freedom with the lighting," he explains. "We are in a world where there are vampires and monsters — and high school students."

Set in the fictional town of Sunnydale, California — a typical suburban community, except for the fact that it's built atop a Hellmouth, a mythical porthole where all the demons of the netherworld have converged — the show revolves around Buffy (Sarah Michelle Gellar), a high school student whose pre-ordained mission in life is eradicating the undead creatures who run amok every evening after the sun sets. Of course, trying to balance a normal high school life with saving the world is no picnic. "Buffy is your basic horror-comedy-action-drama series," jokes show creator Joss Whedon. "It's theme is basically the pain of adolescence, magnified to the point where it becomes genuinely horrific and also genuinely comical."

Naturally, the show needed a visual style that would reflect its mix of genres and emotions. For the daytime "reality" world, in which the kids attend high school and engage in typical teenage activities, Gershman fashioned a bright, color-

ful landscape. For nighttime sequences he shifted to a dark, edgy, textured look, replete with deep blacks and bold slashes of frequently colored light.

While formulating the show's visual look, Whedon and his director of photography screened Luc Besson's action thriller La Femme Nikita (shot by Thierry Arbogast, AFC) and Joel Schumacher's postmodern vampire romp The Lost Boys (Michael Chapman, ASC). "The colors in those films popped very brightly - not in a comic-book style, but in an arresting way that didn't look cheap," says Whedon. "I wanted deep blacks and an eerie beauty that would service both the horror [of the dark side] and the kind of ethereal beauty of it."

The fact the series was shot in 16mm during its first two seasons had a big impact on Gershman's approach. "It's hard to get depth with 16mm," he observes. "It tends to flatten everything out, so one of the early lighting concepts I came up with was to create depth in the frame. If I put a cool light in the background, a warmer one in the middle and a different color light on the actors, the frame doesn't look quite as flat.

"16mm also tends to keep everything in focus; the lenses don't

fall off the way they do in 35mm. That was a problem for me, because I often want to isolate a person or object so the audience will focus on that one point. With 35mm, depth is naturally built into the frame; with 16mm you have to move the camera back and use a longer lens to get that illusion. Frequently, there just isn't room on the set."

Last season, Gershman was given the go-ahead to switch to 35mm, but the change didn't affect the program's stylish look. "I have always liked Michael's footage," says Whedon. "He can give you a beautiful Sarah and a hideous demon in the same light."

The only downside to changing formats was that Gershman had to give up using Vision 320T 7277 because the 35mm version of the stock was more expensive than the 16mm incarnation. Given a choice, he prefers the 320T — "the grain is a little tighter and the color saturation is a little different" — but says he is able to achieve substantially the same look with Kodak's EXR 5298 and 5293 stocks.

One of Buffy's trademarks is the use of backlight, a lesson Gershman picked up during the early days of his career, when he was working as a camera assistant for Néstor Almendros, ASC on Days of Heaven. Gershman's philosophy of lighting was shaped by his work with Almendros, as well as stints with such other ASC greats as Haskell Wexler and Vilmos Zsigmond. The Los Angeles native got into cinematography via animation, working as an animation cameraman before segueing into live-action aerial photography. A few too many close calls in helicopters convinced Gershman to remain on terra firma. The cinematographer then worked on a variety of television projects with Richard C. Glouner, ASC before a recommendation led him to the gig on Days of Heaven. While operating, Gershman worked frequently

Opposite page: **Buffy (Sarah** Michelle Gellar) can't believe the grody changes that have come over her erstwhile beau, Angel (David Boreanaz). This page: Buffy gives the finishing kick to a demon who's down for the count.

Young Blood



Above: In the school library, mentor Rupert Giles (Anthony Stewart Head) and Buffy brief their teenage team: Willow (Alyson Hannigan), Oz (Seth Green), Xander (Nicholas Brendon) and Cordelia (Charisma Carpenter). Right: Michael Gershman blocks out the action for an over-theshoulder shot. with Zsigmond (*The River, Table for Five*), Laszlo Kovacs, ASC (*Shattered, Say Anything*), and Andrzej Bartkowiak, ASC (*Nuts, Falling Down*).

Gershman became a fully-fledged director of photography in 1990 on the NBC series *Shannon's Deal*, and has worked almost exclusively in television since. His other credits include the series *Middle Ages, Moon Over Miami* and *Courthouse*.

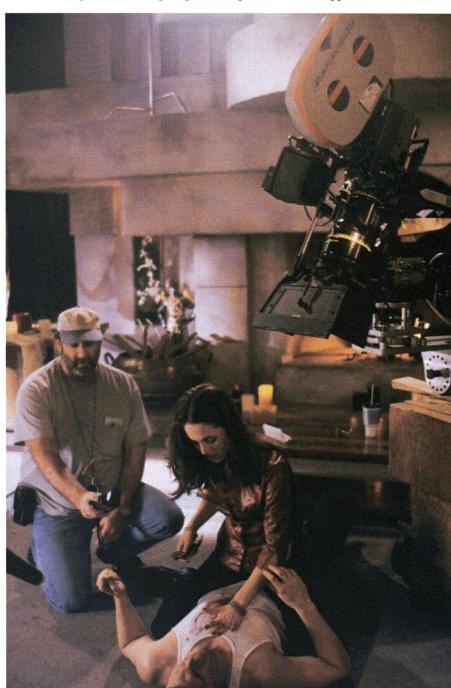
Gershman testifies that has great fun on Buffy. "I love the dark," he reports with a smile. "It represents the unknown." His characters are always going in and out of shadows, often with just a slice of light to illuminate them. "I love to top the light, bring it down and take it off of foreheads. Sometimes I'll cut it all the way past the eyes and just leave a little slash on a cheek or neck and keep the rest of the face [a bit] darker. I use semi-transparent toppers, [diffusing] either with 216, 250 or Opal, depending upon the intensity of the light. Just a little highlight on the face makes the face a lot more interesting to look at."

He also likes to focus his light sources through objects in order to create patterns. A generous selection of cucalorises is always nearby, and he has been known to stack chairs one atop another to produce curious angles of light through chair legs. For one recent scene set at the fictional Sunset Club, where teens who fantasize about being vampires hang out,

electricians hung two Vari-Lites, computer-controlled lamps typically used during concerts and for music videos. True to its name, the Vari-Lite creates variegated patterns, and can be programmed to change not only the pattern but also the color, focus and intensity of the lighting.

During AC's set visit, the Sunset Club was bathed in an ethereal blue light, courtesy of the Vari-Lites and a row of blue Neons which ring one side of the room. The Neons served as the predominant lighting fixtures, and Gershman corrected the other lamps so they'd be a similar shade of blue. On the opposite side of the set, the cameraman placed an Arri 650-watt lamp colored with a ½ straw. "By warming it up, I'm able to play the contrast of the blue," he notes. Leikos and Pars were then hung from the ceiling to enhance the highlights. Four-by-four inch cutouts were also put into the Leikos to create patterns.

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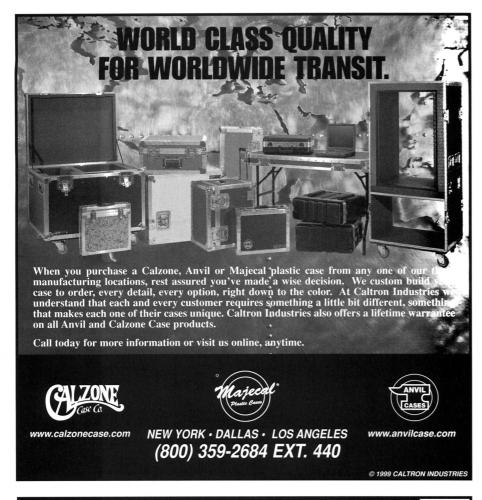
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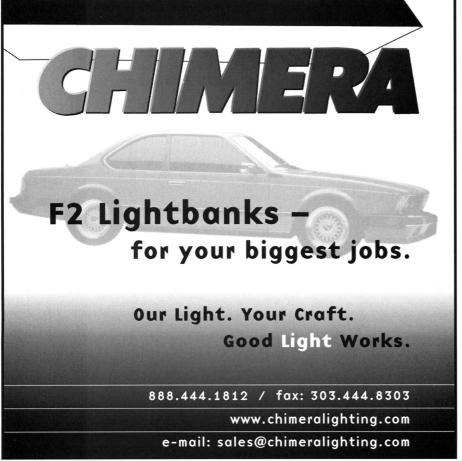
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Support & Lighting





Young Blood

the club. There, daylight-balanced Kino Flos were aimed up through the grating, augmenting the blue cast already established. Standing on the catwalk, Buffy and another student were illuminated from below. "This is where she finds out he's a bad guy," says Gershman of the scene. "I played the light pattern on him because he's a bad guy, but I didn't use it so much on her. I kept her pretty pure and clean."

Many cameramen avoid lighting from below, but on Buffy it helps create the sense of foreboding and impending danger which is so integral to the show. In one episode, a young boy sits alone on a jungle gym late at night, waiting for his mother to pick him up from the playground. The scene opens with a shot of a merry-go-round, lit from underneath by Kino Flos fitted with daylight tubes. Gershman lit the jungle gym and nearby swings the same way. To add to the eeriness, he over-cranked the camera slightly, rendering the swings and merry-goround in subtle slow-motion, as if commanded by an unseen force.

One of Gershman's favorite episodes is "Anne," in which Buffy and a friend find themselves trapped in a Hell-like environment. The ghoulish setting, accented with blue, yellow and white light, was created inside an abandoned newspaper plant (the old Herald Examiner in Los Angeles). "It was a fun area to light," recalls Gershman. "We had these huge vats filled with water to simulate boiling cauldrons, and we put underwater Pars in them with yellow gels to give the water an iridescence. In addition, little rings of fire floated on the water.

"I wanted hot blue streaks sweeping through the area, so I used 4K Xenons," he continues. "Electricians panned the lights manually. Given the size of the building and the time-frame we had, it was impossible to light the entire interior, but I mounted Pars along

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Saturday, 10 am-6 pm, June 26 UCLA: 4000A Math Sciences Fee: \$125 **R**eg# V1679F

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Designed to advance the cinematographer's understanding of film as a medium of visual expression, this course provides participants with practice in acquiring the skills necessary to master composition, exposure, lenses, filters, and other tools of the trade. Assignments cover both still and motion picture photography.

The instructor is **Isidore Mankofsky**, whose 40 years of experience as a cinematographer includes *The Muppet Movie*, *Somewhere in Time*, and *The Jazz Singer*.

Saturday, 10 am-1 pm, June 26-August 28; Saturday, 9 am-5 pm, September 4; Saturday, 10 am-1 pm, September 11 UCLA: 1260 Franz Hall Fee: \$575 Reg# V1633F

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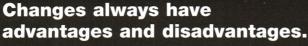
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The instructor is **Eric Erb**, the manager of Technical Services at Panavision Hollywood.

Saturday, 9 am-5 pm, July 10-August 7 Hollywood: Panavision Hollywood, 6735 Selma Ave. Fee: \$585 **R**eg# V1643F

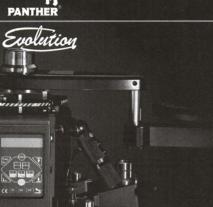
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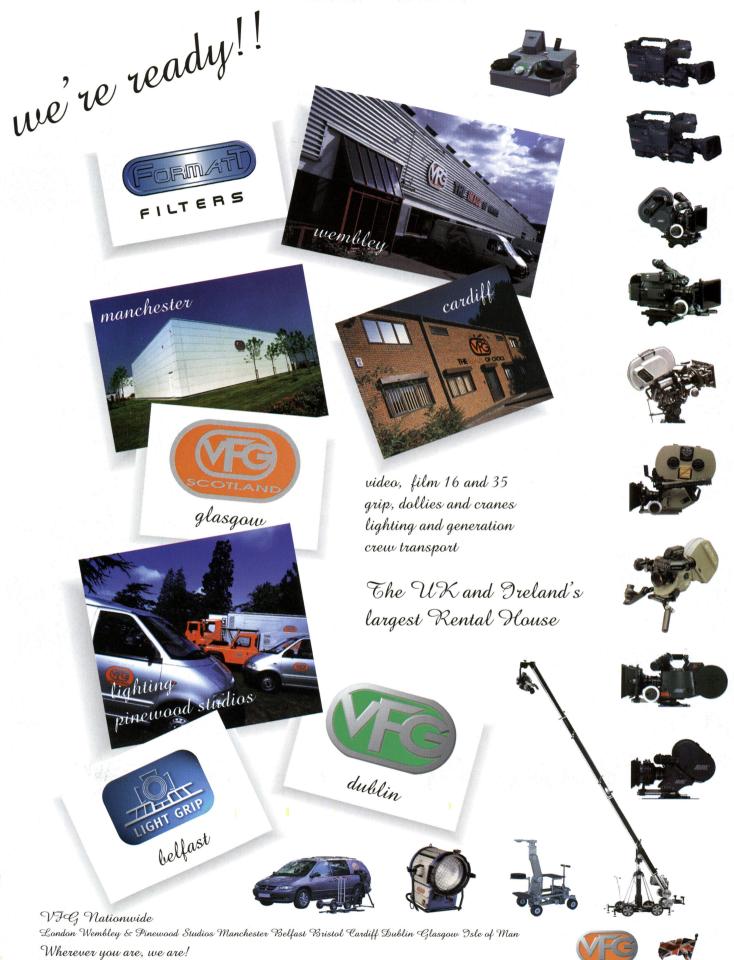
the walls with spot globes in them so we could focus hot patches of light. The Pars were on a dimmer board, and we used Leikos to add extra patterns and lights."

Leikos work especially well on the darker sets, enabling Gershman to keep the general area dark yet bring in a light pattern for a hot streak — without requiring flags to cut them. Arri 300- and 650-watt units are also ubiquitous on the set. "The 650s are my real workhorses," he acknowledges. "I love them because they're small but hot. They have a great Fresnel."

Gershman seldom uses frontlight, preferring to take backlight and wrap it around a person or object, using what he calls a "sissy card" (so named because actor Brad Johnson once asked Gershman, "How come I don't get one of those sissy cards you use on women?"). The card, which he prefers over a standard beadboard bounce, has shiny silver or gold Roscoflex SS (3804) and G (3805) material over it, as well as a frilly curtain. Introduced to this technique by a local grip in North Carolina, Logan Berkshire, Gershman "buys different colored sheer curtains from J.C. Penney," he explains. "I drape a curtain over the card, ruffle it up a little bit, and bounce a light into it. The Rosco material makes the card highly reflective, but when the light bounces back it doesn't travel as far - it's really soft and spread out, without spilling all over the room."

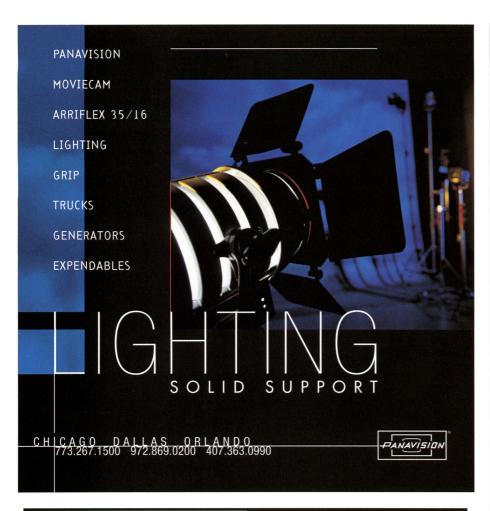
When lighting from above, Gershman likes to use "turkey" coops — a customized hybrid of a chicken coop and a space light which uses 1K FCM bulbs bounced internally off of griffolyn or Roscoflex material and is fully collapsible — and teasers to help focus the light straight down. Since even very soft toplight can create shadows under the actors' eyes, fill light is added.

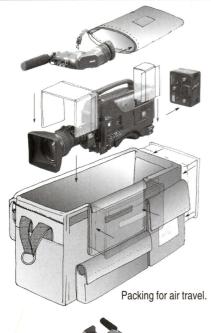
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a GII, about 40 percent of the time, and a Steadicam operator is always available. Although Gershman shifts to prime lenses when light levels dictate it, he prefers using Primo 4:1 (14.5-75mm T2.3) and 11:1 (24-275mm T2.8) zooms, treating them as variable-focal-length "prime" lenses. He likes to work between T2.8 and T4, explaining, "I think the lenses look good at those stops. You don't carry too much depth of field and you get natural falloff." When shooting outside, he'll pop in neutral density filters rather than stop down the aperture.

Gershman frequently employs in-camera effects, such as frame-rate changes, which he accomplishes with a FTZSAC controller. With the FTZSAC, when the frame-rate is manipulated, the device automatically opens the aperture to compensate for exposure. This technique proved useful for an episode that found Buffy bursting into the school building and racing down a hallway toward the library in a vain effort to save another slayer from being killed. "She came in full speed, and then we ramped into slow motion as she ran down the hall," recounts Gershman. "The audience already knows she's too late. For that type of shot, we'll start at a T5.6 at 24 fps to be able to ramp to 96 fps, ending at a T2.8.

The library and school hallway are two of a half-dozen standing sets (others include a classroom, the cafeteria, the school lounge, and Buffy's house). The library has a lot of wood and is dressed in warmer tones than the other sets, so Gershman keeps the light coming through the windows a bit cooler. To achieve this look, he uses 6K HMI Pars corrected with 3/4 CTS. "Daylight naturally tends to be a little bluer, so I like to correct the lights only part way," he explains. "The 3/4 CTS warms them up somewhat, but it still leaves them a little bit blue. If I want to play the scene late in the afternoon, I'll go with a full CTO or CTS correction and then add



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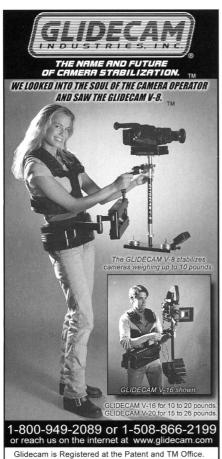
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another 1/4 or 1/2 CTS."

The classroom set has 10Ks shining through each window, while Mole Pars, fitted with very hot "Firestarter" globes (also rigged outside the windows), cast highlights on the blackboard. Gershman also likes to bounce lights off the floor and tabletops. The science classroom has lab tables instead of desks, with stainless steel sinks in each one. Gershman hangs Leikos over each table and bounces light out of the sinks. "To clean up any little problems, we come in with a card and wrap [the light] around a little bit."

For a scene in which Buffy and her erstwhile beau, Angel (David Boreanaz), make love, the action needed to be chaste enough for prime-time television, but also sexy and suggestive. To light the amorous rendezvous, Gershman hung an Arri 650 on a menace arm from above the couple "You can make a menace arm out of anything, a pipe, a stick, even a broom handle," he remarks. "It's just some type of pole that you hang a light from. You then attach the pole to a stand at a fulcrum so that you can move it and rotate it. For that scene, we mounted put the whole thing on a dolly and swung the light back and forth. The light was on a dimmer, and as we swung it across the actors we took the levels up and down. We left the rest of the scene to the audience's imagination."

Time is a constant consideration for Gershman. "It's one of episodic television's worst enemies," he says with a sigh. *Buffy* averages 24 setups a day on its eight-day shooting schedule; a second unit helps out when necessary. There's no time for mistakes, and only slightly more for lighting.

Gershman has nothing but praise for his crew, some of whom, like key grip Tom Keefer, have worked with him for years. "Tom anticipates my every move with the lights. He knows what I want to light and, more importantly, what I *don't*

want to light. I've had a different gaffer each season. Fortunately, I've had three great ones: Larry Kaster during the first season, Dayton Nieter during the second, and Chris Strong this year. I've also had the help of two really great Steadicam operators: Andy Shuttleworth and Bill Brummond."

Crew members offer invaluable suggestions. A night scene at the Los Angeles Zoo looked iffy after zoo officials forbade the rigging of big lights, which they feared would disturb the animals. However, bestboy Gill Valle then suggested bouncing lights off giant (10' diameter) weather balloons. The idea worked perfectly, casting an even, ambient light that resembled a bright moonlit night. "The balloons are such a great tool," Gershman enthuses. "We had an episode last year when we shot on a beach at night. Two people were supposed to walk along the shore ostensibly lit by moonlight — but when shooting out into the water, there was only blackness. There was nowhere to hide lights - no cliffs or piers. To solve the problem, we attached a balloon to a long rope, tied the rope to concrete blocks and anchored the balloon in the water about 200 feet offshore. We then raised the balloon about 50 feet in the air and aimed extremely bright lamps — Maxi-Brutes and 6K HMI Pars — into it from the beach. The light source reflected onto the water, so when we shot the scene, it appeared as if the moon was shining on the water."

A Lenny Arm and Technocrane are also used extensively on the show. One of the more unusual yet deceptively simple tools Gershman employs when shooting daylight exteriors is a large 4' by 4'mirror that serves to cast a hot light on a specific object. He cites an episode in which a group of students, including Zander (Nicholas Brendon), are put into a trance by magical hyenas at the zoo. The kids are transformed into a

dangerous pack, and eventually eat the school principal. "We placed the 4' by 4' mirror on the ground," explains Gershman, "which we had reflecting the sun. The mirror focuses a sharp beam of light, which threw a very hard light onto the characters

For a subsequent sequence, Gershman switched to slow motion and a long lens to isolate the teenagers as they moved up some steps. "At that point in the show, they were very definitely a pack," Gershman notes. "The hard light falling on Zander was from the mirror again, as were the highlights on a balcony in the background. I wanted highlights so the scene wouldn't be flat, but I couldn't do it with lamps; I wouldn't have had time to set them up."

Gershman supervises the final transfer of every show, an unusual luxury in series TV. This advantage is possible because Digital Magic is directly across the street from the soundstages where *Buffy* is shot. "It's an incredibly valuable tool for a cameraman to know what can be done in the telecine bay," he emphasizes. "While we're shooting, I may think 'way too much color,' but I know I can desaturate when I go into the telecine bay. Or maybe I'll go the other way and add color. Michael Schneider is a great colorist."

Although Gershman has thoroughly enjoyed his three years on the show, he actually turned down the job when it was first offered. "At first the show didn't really appeal to me. It was going to be shot on 16mm and was about a vampire slayer named Buffy! I wasn't sure that was the kind of material I wanted to do, but the producer kept calling and saying, 'If you meet Joss, you'll want to do the show.' And he was right."

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Today's top colorists shed light on the latest tricks and trends in telecine.

by Christopher Probst

PART 2 IN A 2-PART SERIES.

f cinema is a melding of the arts literature, photography, music, acting, costuming and architecture — then it could be argued that the commercial realm takes this premise a few steps further. Integrating theories of marketing, fashion trends and graphic design into the cinematic mix, commercials often serve as a showcase for techniques that will be seen in local multiplexes the following year. Directors of photography working in this "short medium" are often allowed to flex their creative muscles and explore new possibilities within this cutting-edge arena. Aiding their endeavors are the oftenoverlooked telecine colorists, who have become key collaborators in this world of bold new visual styles.

"The power that coloring has over the perception of a spot is almost more apparent when you see something that's just ordinary or





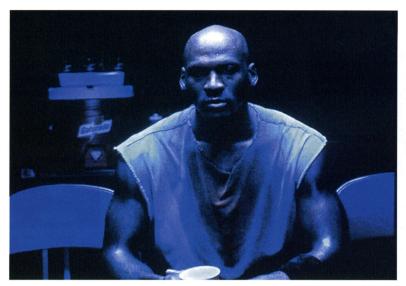
flat," states colorist Stefan Sonnenfeld, who founded the boutique post house Company 3 in Santa Monica, California, with partner/colorist Mike Pethel. Sonnenfeld is considered to be one of the telecine community's leading

colorists, and has been instrumental in devising many of the trendsetting looks and techniques used today. "Now, I'm not talking about a spot that's specifically trying to be flat — for a Seventies look or something like that — but rather one that





may have what it takes to be great, but still lacks a certain quality. For example, if you were to remove all of the color from an otherwise incredibly visual commercial by taking the 'color' out it, the commercial would affect you in a totally different way. That's the best way to describe the effect that coloring can have — it's almost more noticeable when it's not there than when it's there and



working perfectly for the material. You sense and experience every aspect of the visuals without realizing what exactly is affecting you. A lot of emotions can be brought out by coloring. It's a latent, subconscious tool, and that's why it's so powerful."

"The process of coloring an image during the telecine transfer is not just about tweaking knobs," adds Pethel. "Clients often come in with a strong opinion about how their spot should look. The director and/or the director of photography may have even set some of the 'look' in-camera by using various filters and grads or nets during the photography. It is then the colorist's job to take the imagery further toward what the clients imagined, while maintaining a look that is correct for the spot. A colorist may also guide the clients toward any possible improvements that may embellish the look. On the other hand, some clients come in having shot the film normally, and then want the colorist to help create the 'look' for their spot — to take their work to the next level."

The idea of designing "looks" in the telecine environment varies slightly from the traditional film-timing process, during which much of the timer's efforts are focused on

realizing the director and cinematographer's visualizations as they have designed them into the film negative. (See "Color Conundrum" in AC May '97 for discussion of this process.) At the timing stage, there is little room for any radical redesigning of the image, save for adjustments in the overall color-cast and brightness. In the telecine "colorcorrection" process, however, creative options are substantially expanded, allowing one to craft infinite new variations on the original photography.

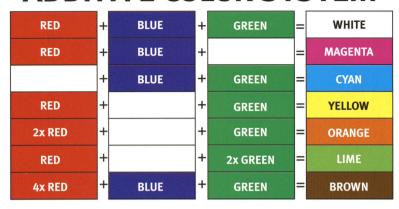
"The best thing for a good transfer is good communication," submits Bob Festa, a veteran commercial colorist and the director of advanced imaging at Encore's Riot facility in Santa Monica, California. "Commercial colorists are usually asked to create an interpretation of the photography that may not necessarily be on the original exposure. A typical commercial telecine session usually involves an entire phalanx of creatives including directors, editors, cinematographers and agency representatives — so communicating about the look on a scene-by-scene basis can become an art form in itself. We often try to democratize what the image is going to be by siphoning a little bit of what everybody is saying.

Opposite: A before-and-after depiction of a typically "colored" image. The top image shows the baseexposure on the negative, revealing a fairly flat, neutrallycolored dusk scene. By heightening the contrast, applying "Power Windows" to the outer areas of the frame, and warming up the color rendering of the scene (bottom image), the eye is directed toward the center of the image. This page: Colorist Stefan Sonnenfeld lent an indigo mood to director/ cinematographer Sam Baver's Gatorade "Challenge" spot featuring Michael Jordan. The clip was further enhanced with brightly colorcontrasted droplets of Gatoradesaturated sweat seeping from the sports icon's pores. The droplets were added digitally by effects house A52.

From Film to Tape

A primer for understanding color-theory depicts the additive and subtractive color systems. A simple analogy can help shed light on these systems. The additive system can be thought of like a television, where color begins with black; by adding values of red. green and blue, one creates white. Likewise. the subtractive system is analogous to film. By beginning with white (clear) and withholding values of yellow, magenta and cyan, you create black. The top diagram illustrates the varying combinations of primary colors to create various sub-colors, while the bottom illustration shows how the absorption of light produces complimentary colors. Additionally, a three-laver film strip diagram displays the relationship between the YCM layers and the reproduction of varying hues.

ADDITIVE COLOR SYSTEM



In the advertising/commercial world, unfortunately, this is probably the norm.

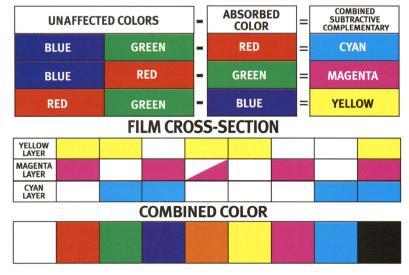
"The best jobs I do are with the people with whom I communicate well," he adds. "Usually, these are people I have worked with for 15 or 20 years, and we have developed communications that go beyond verbal instructions. You learn to read into the image, and before anyone has even spoken a word, you have a pretty good idea about the intended direction of the image. If I'm with new clients, however, the best type of help I can get is a visual aid. I often encourage clients to bring in clippings, other spots, reels, or anything that shows the intended visual direction of their film. It's

much easier to talk about your image if you have something else to compare it to."

Colorist Jais Thierry Lamaire, who recently partnered up with 525 Studios at the firm's new Santa Monica location, has worked in the business for over 20 years, and has been a pioneering contributor to many of telecine's current trends and methods. "There are incredible numbers of techniques that can be used to manipulate and influence the viewer," states Lamaire, a native of Paris. "As a colorist, I scan and color-correct pictures that have already been shot on film. Yes, I control hues and contrasts with a lot of powerful tools, but at the same time, I can only observe and appreciate the quality of the work presented to me. The camera angle, for example, determines the shape of the picture. A low angle may make the image more powerful, while a close-up may create a sense of intimacy. The direction of the light then determines the form and the mood. A split-light will make the image more dramatic, a Rembrandt-style three-quarter light will make it noble, a loop-light will make it round and happy, and a Kino Flo will perhaps create beauty. I then use the contrast and colors to enforce these techniques. A highkey [rendering of the image] with a lot of brightness will provide a sense of energy and happiness, whereas low-key darkness will convey a more somber mood. Blue, for instance, gives off a cold feeling, while amber or yellow makes it warm. Every color temperature has a reason, and color is used to accentuate the message of the piece, whether it's grandiose or an everyday life situation, fashionable or funny."

While it's obviously important to take the client's opinions into account while coloring a spot, a colorist's own tastes do come into play in the tailoring of images. "Art is subjective," says Pethel, "and being an artist means having an opinion about the way something looks. I always try to influence the look of the image in a direction I like, but taste is relative. The artistic aspects of being a colorist are the easiest part of my work. I try to understand people's perception of what they see and what they think they see. If an entire image has a slightly blue cast, for example, after a few minutes everybody in the room may start to think that the image is neutral. The colorist then has to be a sort of 'visual cop' and maintain the quality, even though a lot of the people don't perceive the image exactly as it is. I'm not saying that the clients don't know what they're

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From Film to Tape

Mike Pethel of Company 3 enhanced the look of the Sony Playstation commercial "Clown Prison." which was shot by director/ cameraman Peter Smillie. The contrast was increased crushing the blacks and popping the whites - while the colors were greatly saturated and the sky dramatically darkened. Additional use of **PowerWindows** helped shape the edges of the frame and direct the eye.



looking at, but the human eye can be tricked over time, so you have to use the scopes. The monitor in the bay is only a relative visual aid for the clients. They only way you can really know the color of something is by looking at it absolutely, with an electronic measuring device."

Color Theory

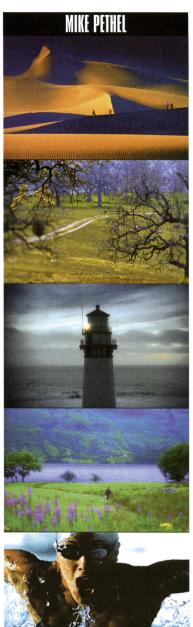
In discussing the manipulation of color in the telecine environment, it is necessary to have a general understanding of two basic color systems (see table on page 104).

The first system comprises the additive primary colors — red, green and blue (RGB) — which are the primary components that form white light. By mixing RGB in varying proportions, almost all of the other colors in the visible spectrum can be produced — even certain purples and magentas that don't appear in the spectrum as discrete wavelengths.

The second color system incorporates the subtractive primaries: yellow (red-green), cyan (blue-green) and magenta (red-blue) — denoted together as YCM. Each subtractive primary represents white light minus one of the additive primaries. Therefore, each subtractive primary is a compliment of that respective, missing additive primary.

Thus, cyan is complementary to red, and when red is added to cyan, the result is white light. Similarly, magenta is complementary to green, and yellow is complementary to blue. More simply put, the sum of any two primaries is the complementary color of the third primary. Red and blue, for example, yield magenta, which is the compliment of green. Conversely, when two subtractive primaries are added together, the combined subtraction of any pair will yield one of the additive primaries. For example, when cyan (which subtracts red from white light) is combined with magenta (which subtracts green), the result is blue.

Understanding these principals is important not only in terms of tweaking dials on a color-corrector board; they also factor fundamentally into the design and structure of photographic films, and have a broad impact on the printing and computer industries. In fact, in motion picture color negative film, the YCM subtractive primaries are used in the formation of the emulsion's three color-sensitive layers. The top, yellow layer is only sensitive to blue light, and passes the green and red components through to the cyan and magenta layers, which then form their respective exposures.



"Obviously, part of the colorist's role is understanding the color systems," says Lou Levinson, a veteran feature-film colorist stationed at Post Logic in Hollywood. Levinson, who now uses a recently installed Cintel C-Reality machine in his bay, has worked with an impressive client list of top directors and cinematographers over the past 20 years. "As a colorist, I need to know what it means to have primary

and complementary colors, and to be aware of the limitations of any particular system. For instance, I need to know what a monitor can and can't show you. There are a number things you'll see when a film print is projected up on a screen that you will never see on a consumer television set."

Approaching Color

The process of color-correcting an image in telecine begins at the moment the negative is exposed in the camera. It is during this instant that the foundation of what a colorist can or cannot build into a desired look is indelibly established. "Understanding the nature of film and the various lab processes — ENR, bleach-bypass, cross-processing, shooting on high-contrast sound-recording stock, and so on — helps in what I do," Sonnenfeld submits. "Toward that end, I've operated and shot some music videos and commercials myself, so I can fully understand the filming process. Being familiar with your craft is important. I get called all the time by people asking which stock they should use, how they should expose it, and which filters should be added in order to best create a certain look.

"These are really questions for a cinematographer, but I answer them because I view my role in any project as being part of the [visual] collaboration. That collaborative effort is very intertwined now between the director, the director of photography, the colorist, the Henry/Flame artist, and even the editor and sound designer. When you're going to strive for a particular look at the telecine stage, it may be necessary to do certain things in the shooting and art direction to aid the process. By being familiar with the many looks that are possible, I can often recommend to a client the quickest, most efficient, and leastexpensive photographic

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From Film to Tape



Bob Festa of Santa Monica-based Riot colored this Nike spot, "Running of the Bulls," which was photographed by Franz Lustig for director Ralf Schmerberg of @radical media. The clip features a showdown between several hundred angry steer and Denver Broncos linemen.

needed to deliver the desired result."

"As a colorist, you need to stay ahead of the game, because this industry evolves very quickly," Lamaire states. "I must keep exploring the video color spectrum and high definition — when and why to use interlaced or progressive — and 2K. I also need to keep exploring the exposure density of the film stocks made by Kodak, Fuji, and Agfa, and stay on on top of the different lab and printing techniques."

Lamaire notes that he has a background in photography. "That experience has given me the knowledge to advise clients when they call and ask how to shoot a particular setup so that we can bring out the best [qualities of the footage] during the telecine transfer. One of the most important tools I have come across lately in film-to-tape transfer is the use of proper gamma curve. I now use Kodak's website for that. I find that 80 percent of the jobs I work on are not fully explored because of time, money, or other circumstances like bad weather. There are compromises in filmmaking, but it's not as difficult anymore to match the concepts presented by a creative team. By using the prescribed gamma curve [for an individual film stock], I can quickly find the film's exposure and make the necessary adjustments, whether the clients want the picture to be shiny or grainy, flat or contrasty, Mother Nature-perfect, or off-color and affected."

After a piece of film is exposed and processed, the first order of business in translating the resulting image to the electronic realm is to configure the telecine machine. Forgoing the inherent differences between the various telecine machines that are available (see Part 1 of this article in AC May '99), all of the colorists interviewed for this story agreed that to achieve an optimum video transfer, the telecine machine must be electronically aligned and optimized for each individual project, scene or shot. "There are a lot of knobs on a telecine, none of which should be set to 'automatic," submits Pethel, "Every setting has a place — and a correct place. You may go through the system and say, 'I always leave my sharpening at this level, or this is how I do it generally,' but that approach really overlooks some possibilities for making adjustments. Every scene needs to be looked at individually. All negatives are slightly different, depending on the processing and whether the filmmakers pushed their stocks or not, so the first thing that we do is to set the negative to be correct as shot, establishing a flat, basic setting."

Expands Festa, "Even if you're going to take an image to a place that wasn't suggested on the original location exposure, I think everybody still wants to see a good representation of the original latent image. As a rule of thumb, even if we're going to really twist the imagery, we always optimize the machine for a natural exposure that everybody is comfortable and familiar with, and maybe even saw in their dailies. With that in mind, I always like to first create a quick, traditional rendering of the negative, and then show the clients a whole array of opportunities based upon that image. Then, if it does get pushed to where things may get noisy, there are ways to either hide or disguise that by perhaps taking a different tack. Different approaches can either hide or enhance all sorts of aspects of the image."

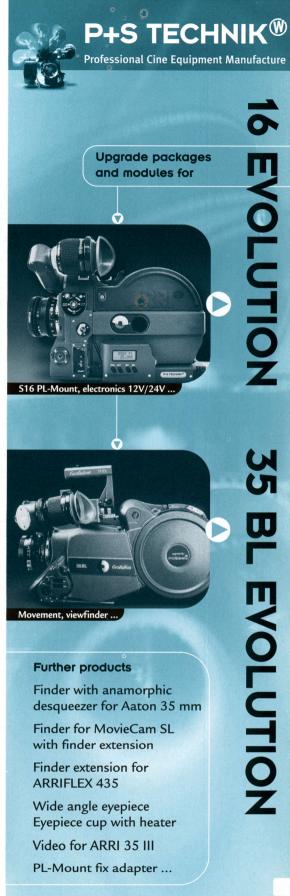
The Color-Corrector

There are several controls that allow the colorist to manipulate the electronic interpretation of the film image. Understanding these controls — what their functions in the process are, as well as their possible misuse — can empower a creative artist to obtain better results with less confusion and possibly avoid the introduction of electronic artifacts. Regardless of the specific color-corrector board used in a particular telecine bay — such as da Vinci's Renaissance 8:8:8, or the Pogel Digital Colour Processor there are two basic levels of control in the hierarchy of color-correction: the first entails the primary colorcorrection, while the second



features a secondary set of controls.

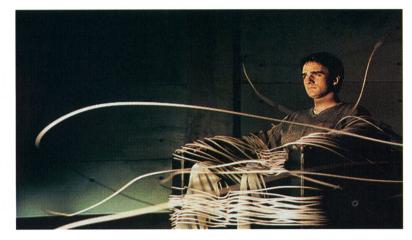
Primary color-corrections are those that affect the overall color balance of the image. Similar to the concept of additive primaries, the primary color-correctors work with the red, green and blue color channels to affect the color-rendering in the low-light, mid-tones and highlights of the image. At the primary level, the adjustments tend to inter-



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From Film to Tape

Colored by Jais Lamaire of 525 Studios, this DirecTV ad, entitled "Cable Pull", was created by director/ cameraman Michael Karbelnikoff.



act with each other; as in film timing, adjusting one primary control affects the compliment of that color. For example, adding red to a highlight will reduce the level of cyan. Within the three primary color controls, the colorist has three parameters that define the influence of that color on the image. These controls — lift, gamma and gain allow for precise tuning of the specific color-channel's properties. Gain controls the video amplitude, or brightness, of the color. Likewise, the lift control adjusts the black level of the video signal, while gamma refers to middle tonalities that fall between the whites and the blacks.

By adjusting each primary color's three properties in relation to each other, the scene's complete color and tonal rendering is achieved. The combined RGB gains of each signal constitute the whites of the scene and the overall brightness. Similarly, the combined lift adjustments of each color channel will determine the blacks of the entire image. With the whites (gain) and blacks (lift) set, the gamma then manipulates the scene's mid-tone contrast and balance.

Secondary color-correction takes this control one step further and enables a specific color within the spectrum to be manipulated independently of the scene's overall coloring. The secondaries separate the primaries and their compliments, allowing adjustment of the

specific hue, saturation and, in some cases, luminance of a narrow color range. For instance, adjustments may be made to red without effecting the levels of cyan. With their high degree of selectivity, the secondaries are a powerful component in the colorcorrection process, allowing for more precise isolation of a color for advanced windowing/processing controls. However, one should exercise caution with their usage, in that haphazard tweaking of the secondaries can wreak havoc on an image in the hands of an inexperienced colorist, potentially resulting in some bizarre color schemes and electronic artifacts.

"You have to know all of the tools and all of the ways that you can possibly manipulate the film — even things that you're not supposed to do and that aren't 'correct," states Pethel. "There are multiple ways to manipulate the image, and you need to know how they interact and affect each other. You can get a similar look several different ways [on the colorcorrector], but technically, one approach can be more correct. Also, creating a look for a scene is one thing, but being able to make all of the different scenes look that way, coming from different sources, is where the hard part comes in. You can manipulate one piece of film and get a great look, but if you can't go through all of the client's negative and make it all match from scene to



scene, then you're really not doing them any good. The real goal of coloring is to make the image look as if it has not been manipulated in video or feel electronic in any way. There are a lot of different looks you can create from the negative, but the one you don't want is one that looks as if it has been processed."

Expands Festa, "Within a commercial, you may have several







From Film to Tape

Riot colorist Beau Leon's rendering of Bally's Total Fitness "Side" spot.

different shots or vignettes that are photographed on different days and at different locations. Even within each roll, the footage can go from interior to exterior to daylight to a night scene. In each case, I try to go as far upstream as I can, adjusting the black-and-white negativematching to get the best signal-tonoise ratio, while placing the coloring range as close as possible to where I want it. I like to get a wide, dynamic range of response off the scanner — which in my case is a Spirit DataCine — so I manipulate what comes off of it as far upstream film negative. On a music video, we may have 10 different setups, so before locking in a look, I'll take at least a roll or two of each setup, and with the cinematographer and the director, go through maybe 10 or 15 different looks for each major setup to see what will work. If we were to fly blind and start from the beginning saying, 'Okay this shot looks good, let's lay it down like this,' then maybe it won't all cut together by the time we get to the last shot. I like to look at everything that will be in the video and get a feel for what the palette will be. Also, with music

maybe it won't all cut together by the time we get to the last shot. I like to look at everything that will be in the video and get a feel for what the palette will be. Also, with music

as possible to get the most response as early in the chain as possible. These [control] handles are now pretty much remoted at the console and are programmable. They affect the biasing of the image several levels up from the traditional primary or secondary color-correctors we work with, so if you know you're going to twist the hell out of the image downstream, you still want a natural image upstream."

Adds music-video/commercial colorist Beau Leon, who recently joined Festa at Riot, "Every piece of film is completely different. I don't care if it's the same shot from a different roll. The first thing I do is set my three color channels to the

videos, I really like to listen to the song and examine as much of the film as possible with different looks to see what will work best. Sometimes you might set up a certain look but then find that when you play the song, the combination doesn't really work."

Coloring the Image

The approach a colorist uses to tackle the manipulation of an image's look can vary almost infinitely. "You need to be direct and analytical about the artistic approach to coloring," suggests Pethel. "The great painters didn't plop colors on their canvas and figure it out as they went along.

There is a specific process once you decide what you want to do. There are some less-experienced colorists out there who find a look by kind of 'playing' with the knobs. Even worse, after they've twiddled a bunch of knobs to find the look, they don't back out all the way and go back at the coloring from the 'ground-zero' negative. They meander their way into the look and then leave a lot of knobs turned that don't necessarily need to be adjusted. When that happens, you can have all sorts of secondary artifacts in the image that really aren't necessary and certainly don't need to be there. You can get a 'look' that way, but when you try to go back and match that look with a lot of different sources of film, it often can't be done."

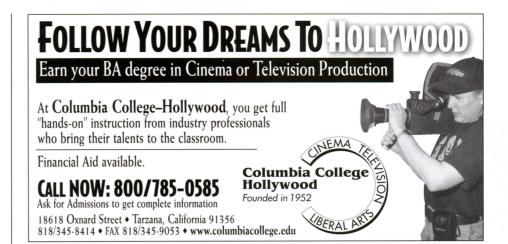
Another dangerous practice performed by some less-experienced telecine operators is a technique Festa affectionately calls "the shuffle," which involves the telecine operator "scrolling through previous color-corrections in the hope of landing on an interesting look for the scene at hand." He maintains, "I think the best colorists want to look at the film where it is, at an even mid-light, to see where the image should be. I can get much better results by going back to ground zero than I ever could by shuffling back to previous corrections. The image could have all of these twisted secondary deviations that you wouldn't want to introduce to another image. You'd just be pinning yourself into a corner."

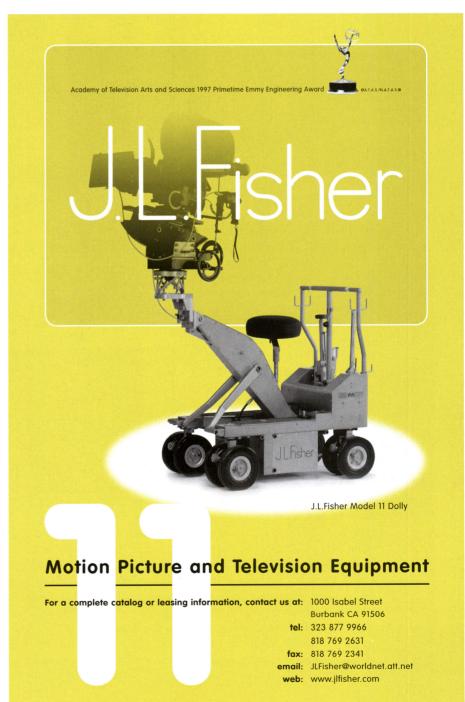
All of the colorists interviewed agreed that they prefer to start from scratch on the negative and then tackle the coloring almost exclusively with the primary color-correctors. "I don't tweak secondaries like a lot of people do," states Sonnenfeld. "I work almost exclusively with the primaries and I find that the basic tools work very effectively in doing what I want them to

do. I don't fight with the machine and tweak it way out to create my looks. I don't know if that's necessarily good or bad, I just know that I can get what I want very quickly whether it's a funky look or not by using the general tools. It just takes a good understanding of how film responds and where you want to take it, and the ability to utilize the equipment in the smartest manner. It's hard to explain the process. You balance the film the way it should be balanced — taking into account the direction in which you may be manipulating the imagery — and then color from there. You don't just whack out a shot and then go to the next without rebalancing the film."

"I really believe there can be no wrong look," Leon offers in counterpoint. "Even if the skin tone is blue, it doesn't mean that it's wrong. I think a lot of people have these theories of what is right and what is wrong, and they don't go past that. If you can broadcast it, it's not wrong. Obviously, you have to stay within the broadcast standards, but most of the color-correctors have [internal] clips, so you can pretty much whack things way out and it will air safely."

These priorities may change a bit on the feature-film side of telecine work, however. In transferring most motion pictures, creating an unusual look may be less important than simply creating an accurate electronic representation of what was projected in theaters. "I see myself as a translator for the filmmakers as they try to move their work from one medium to another," says Levinson. "Toward that end, I've developed a critical eye and a good memory for what I've seen on the screen. You try to maintain the filmmakers' vision, and occasionally improve it where they would have if they could have on the film print. One of the best compliments you can get when you're coloring a





From Film to Tape

theatrical film is when the director or the cinematographer says, 'That's better than the movie was.'

"When I start a new film, the first thing I do is to have a screening," he adds. "Knowing what the picture is supposed to look like always helps. In fact, at Post Logic, we've designed our [feature] telecine rooms with projection capabilities built into to them so I can take an answer print, string it up and look at it while I'm color-correcting. That always helps to get you in the ballpark, but the video version of the film will still require its own compromises."

Tricks of the Trade

Included among the arsenal of creative tools available to colorists are controls such as da Vinci's Power Windows, Sony's DME 7000, the Kaleidoscope, and the Abacus, as well as the ability to use filters installed in the gate of the telecine. These tools have expanded the range of coloring possibilities even further. Power Windows, for instance, is an option that isolates user-defined areas of the image so they may be selectively enhanced with independent primary and/or secondary corrections. By selecting these areas with geometric shapes such as circles, rectangles and ovals (with user-defined softened/graduated edges), complex filter and lighting effects can be achieved.

"An advantage for the commercial colorist is the ability to use tools that are beyond the realm of traditional correction technology [used in film print color-timing,]" says Festa. "Techniques such as using filters, stockings and channels of DVEs are routinely employed to add a value to the image being manipulated. Softening the texture of the fleshtones and peak whites are prime examples of the three-dimensional techniques that are quite common for the telecine environment. If you look at any commercial





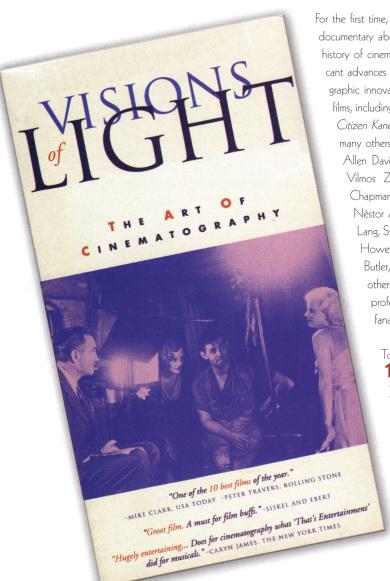
or music video done in the past five years, you'll see examples of these techniques that are still unavailable through traditional filmmaking. These ancillary tools, combined with today's color-corrector technologies, are what make the commercial colorist an artist as well as a technician."

"You can get a lot of great imagery by using these techniques," agrees Pethel. "I love defocusing the image electronically [with the DME 7000] and then mixing it back into the straight image. Depending on the way it's used, you can give the picture a dreamy or painterly feel. You can use boxes for softening just the chroma channels only and create a tinted look. Or, by getting rid of some of the hue variants, you can manipulate the colors you put back into the image so that there are only a few tones, which creates a hand-painted look. Also, there are several different effects you can create with softening. If you soften the light source in the gate of the telecine, you soften the blacks in the image, since you're most often dealing with negative film where the polarity of the light [projected through the negative] is reversed. If you're transferring from a print, softening the light source would similarly affect the whites."

Leon submits, "I've done all kinds of things, from putting Evian bottles in the telecine gate to placing broken pieces of glass in front of the pickup lens. I like those ideas much more than resorting to Power Windows, because it's more organic. It looks as if you did it in the camera, instead of with some odd digital effect."

"I characterize some of these techniques as rubber-band and paper-clip technology," expands Festa. "Unfortunately, today's colorcorrectors really don't offer too many opportunities for [further] artistic interpretation, so you have to be willing to go outside of the color-corrector and use tools like a K-scope or filters in the gate to take the experience even further. We've all been pushing for textural techniques to be incorporated into the color-correctors, but our pleas have pretty much been falling on deaf ears. Photoshop and AfterEffects both have textural tools that everybody can use on their Mac, and we'd love to incorporate those tools into a real-time telecine environment.

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From Film to Tape

Unfortunately, they still haven't been implemented, so we have to incorporate additional 'tools' from the rubber-band and paper-clip bin."

Safeguarding the Image

It is also highly recommended to finish postproduction of a project within one post house, thereby avoiding any pitfalls encountered with different internal signal-standards practices. Indeed, the hardware itself also contributes to the way an image can be manipulated. For example, Lamaire states, "Contrary to some philosophers, I like to have fun with equipment that doesn't have presets, and, in my opinion, limitations. The C-Reality 525/625/HD/2K machine allows me to use all of the tools in the bay without the usual restrictions. Its Color Vector Image Processor [CVIP] — which comes before the conventional da Vinci signal

processing — is a big part of this. I can use pre-gamma or post-gamma primaries, individual color-curve secondaries and aperture correction, and they all interact with each other perfectly. There's no more noise, no weave, and no artifacts when the desired gamma curve is applied to the film, so I can lay down a shot 10 times with different settings and it will always line up perfectly. With the C-Reality, I don't have to stretch and bend the color any more. We also work within our legal color limits, which allows me to guarantee perfect broadcast quality. As colorists, we see the picture in its best [possible viewing condition]. But most of our work, with a few exceptions, ends up on 3/4" [tape] or Betacam SP for broadcast, and 3/4" or VHS for demo reels and presentations. [Needless to say,] I can't wait for digital television."

"On every job we do, espe-

cially if the job will be finished inhouse, we work within a safety net, which is the legal-color limiting," agrees Festa. "We have to work within a legal color space that the other systems — such as the Flame, Fire and, to some extent, Henry can support. When we're passing imagery between these various boxes, we have to be cautious about the type of signal we pass coming from the telecine. As a result, we work with some pretty restrained colorimetry that can be limiting at times, but at least in the final output, I know that the composite NTSC signal we end up with will look like what we saw in the telecine transfer."

Other elements that affect the coloring process include the vagaries of current consumer-grade televisions. "They are one of the biggest problems we face," says Pethel. "They aren't made to repli-



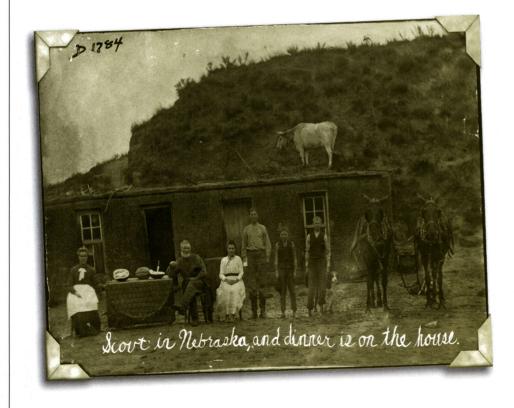
cate what we are doing in the telecine bay. They're made to compete at Circuit City — that's where it matters how they look. On the sales floor, they all get the same video feed and are lined up next to each other, so a lot of the manufacturers have their own 'formula' for the way they feel their sets should look. In fact, many monitors do automatic phase, chroma and black level manipulations in addition to standard 'black-clamping' circuitry found in all monitors. You can feed a flat image into a particular monitor and the dark areas of the image will suddenly crush down to black.

"In fact," he continues, "this phenomenon has been a real problem with many of the ads we see. For example, at the end of some recent Gap spots we worked on, there is a dark-blue Gap logo that comes up against a white cyc. With the auto-

matic 'correction' circuits in the home monitors, the television sets would make the dark-blue logo black. The color blue has a low luminance base of around 11 percent, so when the blue logo came up, the monitor would adjust the [color] to black. To correct that, I put a small black crop — analogous to a letterbox — on the top and bottom of the frame, but outside of the televised action area. The set was given a reference for the black, allowing the dark areas of the image to fall into place accordingly."

As technology increases the ability to further improve the quality of filmed images, the bar will continually be raised for both cinematographers and colorists. Additionally, as film technology makes even greater strides, and steps are taken toward digital and high-definition television, video-mastered images will surely deliver new surprises in

the years to come. "Most colorists use basically the same equipment," concludes Sonnenfeld. "In fact, I'm happy that everybody is using good equipment now, because the work as a whole gets better. However, what separates you as a colorist is where you take if from there. There are some people who are inherently good at what they do, whether it's because they have a gift or because they love the job so much. I also think there are colorists out there who are really good because they work really hard to get to a certain stage. But then there are the few for whom coloring comes naturally, and they're able to quickly translate what they feel, and what they've experienced in their lives, cultures and education. In this profession, that's what delineates you [from the



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The Academy salutes the creators of today's cinematic tools at the 1998 Scientific and **Technical Awards** ceremony.

> by Jay Holben and **Christopher Probst**

Regent Hotel's Ballroom, senior product

t an elegant dinner event held on February 27, 1999 in the Beverly Wilshire Academy of Motion Picture Sci-Tech Awards Arts and Sciences honored the industry's most forward-thinking technicians. Each award recipient's CEO Bill Miller, contribution to the art and craft of filmmaking has had a significant impact on the way films are created; scientist Eric honorees are determined by the votes the Academy's Board of Governors, based upon recommenhome the dations by the Scientific and Academy Technical Awards Committee, chaired by ASC associate member Composer. Edmund M. Di Giulio.



Avid at the

(left to right)

Tom Ohanian,

Phillips, chief

founder Bill

Avid Film

Avid chief editor

designer Michael

Peters, and Avid

Warner all take

statuette for the

Scientific and Technical Awards are given for devices, methods, formulas, discoveries or inventions of special and outstanding value to the art and science of motion pictures. These inventions must also have a proven history of use in the motion picture industry.

Sci-Tech Awards are granted in any of three classifications: Academy Award of Merit (Oscar statuette), for basic achievements that have a definite influence upon the advancement of the industry; Scientific and Engineering Award (Academy plaque), for those achievements that exhibit a high level of engineering and are important to the progress of industry; and **Technical** Achievement Award (Academy certificate), for those accomplishments that contribute to the progress of the industry.

Following are accounts of Avid Technology's Academy Award of Merit, as well as a complete listing of this year's other honorees.

AVID'S OSCAR

Over the course of the nearly 75-year history of the Oscar ceremonies, the Academy Award of Merit has only been presented a total of 35 times.

During the 71st annual Oscar celebration, this prestigious honor was bestowed upon Avid Technology Incorporated for the concept, system design and engineering of the Avid Film Composer, a revolutionary motion picture editing system. Founded in 1987 by Bill Warner, Avid Technology Tewksbury, Massachusetts released its first innovation, the Media Composer, to great fanfare and reception in 1989. Prior to that tool's debut, however, Warner, Eric Peters, Michael Phillips, Tom Ohanian, Joe Rice and Patrick O'Connor were already developing what would become an even greater achievement: the Film Composer, which has since become a household brand

name in the industry. The digital, non-linear, 24-frame-per-second editing system utilized unique compression algorithms to revolutionize the art of film editing. Although still a relatively young system, the Avid has thoroughly planted its roots in the filmmaking world, all but completely supplanting the Moviolas and Kem flatbed editing systems that dominated the industry just a decade ago.

One of the greatest achievements of the Avid system was the creation of a true 24 fps environment that would allow editors to produce flawless negative conform cut-lists from the digital source. "The number one priority for us [on the Film Composer] was to create a system that had a 1:1 correlation with the original film frames," explains Mike Phillips, Avid's senior product designer and one of the engineers behind the design of the Film Composer. "All of the editing systems at that point were editing film at 30 frames per second. In cases like that, when you go back to the film you're only accurate to plus or minus one frame. One of the main questions that editors asked us when we released the Composer was, 'Is what I am seeing on the screen exactly what I'm going to get when the I see the film on the big screen?'

"We looked at the pattern that was created in the 2:3 pull-down with telecine," continues Phillips, "and by creating an algorithm to analyze a series of frames upon digitization, we could identify what the pattern was — whether it was A, B, C or D, and exactly which field was which. Creating 24 frames from that is just a matter of integrating a capture mask that purely defines which fields we digitally capture and which we don't.

"Once we achieved that 1:1 relationship, we could look at those editors and say, 'Yes. What you see is what you get — every time.' At that point there were no objections as far

as adopting the technology."

Phillips further points out that "the true 24-frame architecture also offered us a number of other advantages, such as an increase in storage allocation. Because the Avid is not digitizing five video frames for every four film frames, dropping that single frame offers a full 20 percent more storage space [than a 30 fps system]."

Tom Ohanian, a senior editor and another member of Avid's invention team, picks up the tale of the system's genesis where Phillips left off: "The next progression of events was to concentrate on all the things that editors would have to rely on the laboratory for: optical effects, step-printing or skip-printing, dissolves, bi-packs and superimpositions. All of these processes required a great deal of time, and sometimes a doubling or even quadrupling of effort just to see if the effect fit the sequence. All of these effects were already available in the Media Composer, and once we achieved the 24-frame system with the Film Composer, we were able to introduce the whole range of effects into the new system and considerably reduce the amount of time it took for editors to previsualize these effects for a specific look in the film."

To achieve this integration, however, the Avid team had vet another hurdle to overcome. "Video does not react in the same way to these effects as film does," imparts Phillips. "Take the case of a simple dissolve. Video has a very linear progression — the outgoing image leaves over a certain period of time and the incoming image replaces it. If it's a 24-frame dissolve, then at 12 frames the entire video image is at exactly 50 percent, and then it goes away. It's a very straight-line progression, and all of the video image fades at the same rate. Film doesn't behave that way — the brightest part of the image is always the last to leave. We studied the behavior of negative and

A Cut Above

interpositive stocks during these effects, and with the cooperation of Kodak, we worked out a series of algorithms to make the video behave exactly like the interpositive, based on the luminance values, so that there would be no surprises later — when the effect is actually created in the lab, it will look exactly as it did in the Film Composer."

After four years of research, development and field testing, the Avid Film Composer was introduced to the world in 1992. The first widely released feature to utilize the newborn digital gadget Columbia Pictures' 1993 comedy Lost in Yonkers, edited by Steven Cohen, Since then, more than 700 feature films have been edited on the system. In 1997, Walter Murch became the first editor to win the Academy Award for work completed on the Avid Film Composer, in recognition of his expert cutting on Anthony Minghella's The English Patient. (Murch also received the coveted Eddie award from the American Cinema Editors and the British Academy of Film and Television Arts Award for his work on the film.) This year, three of the five films nominated for the Academy Award for Best Editing — Life is Beautiful, Out of Sight and The Thin Red Line — were cut on an Avid Film Composer.

The company recently acquired Softimage, and has also announced several new innovations, including pushing the Avid Symphony line into the 24-frame progressive environment. The new Symphony capabilities include a dual-stream, real-time, 10-bit colorcorrection engine allowing global, scene-to-scene or intraframe correction, as well as control over RGB, HSL and Luma levels. Symphony color-correction will also provide SafeColor, a built-in intelligence that facilitates the identification of colors that do not meet broadcast standards. Rounding out the new

Symphony feature set are a new 10-bit DVE, an improved keyer with realtime spill suppression, and the Softimage Marquee plug-in application for producing sophisticated 3-D animated titles.

At this April's National Association of **Broadcasters** Conference (NAB), Avid introduced the Unity, a revolutionary new concept of shared-storage and distributed-computing products that will become the foundation of Avid's digital nonlinear production environment. A combination advanced media networking and shared central computing technology, the system is designed to connect many digital media workstations, regardless of format or platform. The core of this integration is MediaNet, an open network based on an advanced media file system that enables real-time, simultaneous sharing of high-bandwidth media. MediaNet supports Macintosh, Windows NT and SGI IRIX platforms, as well as the latest networking technologies such as ATM, Gigabit Ethernet and Fibre Channel. In addition, Avid Unity MediaNet supports any application that uses standard file system calls, allowing almost any application to be connected to the Avid Unity media network.

"We started to notice that with greater demands on the postproduction schedule, shows were bringing in multiple editors," says Phillips. "In the old days, if you wanted to do this you would bring in three editors and three Moviolas or three Kems, divide up the film and go to it. We took that same idea and refined it with multiple Film Composers all connected to a central storage system. In the case of True Lies, a production that really took advantage of it, three editors were working simultaneously. Each editor was hired for a certain strength - one was very good at action, for example, and another was very good at the actual story structure and love

themes. James Cameron wanted to be able to go from system to system at any point in time, and have the option of viewing just the specific sequence that the editor was working on, or see that sequence in the context of the whole movie."

Bill Miller, CEO of Avid Technology, provides further context: "Clearly we're pushing down a path toward enabling much higher levels of collaboration and interaction between the various disciplines of postproduction. In the future, as pressure keeps mounting to bring postproduction costs down — while at the same time keep improving the quality of work — the seamless integration of the sound designer, editor and effects artist is going to be irresistible to the industry. We think this is going to create a work environment that will dramatically enhance people's productivity and creative options. We're pretty excited to be moving forward toward those goals."

SCIENTIFIC AND ENGINEERING AWARDS

(Academy Plaques)

— Jay Holben

Dr. Thomas G. Stockham, Jr. and Robert B. Ingebretsen for their pioneering work in the areas of waveform editing, cross-fades and cut-and-paste techniques for digital audio editing.

The foundation of current digital audio editing equipment for motion pictures has its roots in the late-Seventies work of these digital pioneers.

James A. Moorer for his pioneering work in the design of digital signal processing and its application to audio editing for film.

This early work in systems architecture and software has had a significant impact on the digital creation of sound effects and the editing of audio for motion picture soundtracks.

Stephen J. Kay of K-Tec Corporation for the design and



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development of the Shock Block.

This specially designed ground-fault interrupter eliminates the electric shock hazard when working in water or wet conditions, or when dealing with an accidentally exposed power line.

Gary Tregaskis, for the primary design, and Dominique Boisvert, Phillippe Panzini and Andre LeBlanc for the development and implementation of the Flame and Inferno software.

The Inferno System and its predecessor, Flame, provide high-speed, efficient integrated digital compositing and visual effects tools.

Robert Predovich, John Scott, Ken Husain and Cameron Shearer for the design and implementation of the Soundmaster Integrated Operations Nucleus operating environment.

The Soundmaster system provides motion picture audio post-production facilities with a completely integrated capability for synchronization of audio and picture elements with the numerous methods of synchronization in use today.

Roy Ference, Steve Schmidt, Richard J. Federico, Rocky Yarid and Mike McCrackan for the design and development of the Kodak Lightning Laser Recorder.

The Kodak Lightning laser recorder system established higher operational and quality standards and achieved wide industry acceptance for digital film recording onto intermediate film stock.

Colin Mossman, Hans Leisinger and George John Rowland for the concept and design of the Deluxe High-Speed Spray Film Cleaner.

This innovative and effective high-speed film-cleaning machine is unique in its use of spray technology, providing the flexibility to use alternative solvents and to anticipate changes in environmental legislation.

Arri USA, Inc., for the concept, and the engineering staff of

Arnold & Richter Cine Technik, under the direction of Walter Trauninger, for the engineering of the Arri 435 Camera System.

The 435 enhances the creative process via its programmability and reliability, and provides the camera operator with the widest feature and performance capability of any MOS camera in use today.

Arnold & Richter Cine Technik and the Carl Zeiss Company for the concept and optical design of the Carl Zeiss/Arriflex Variable Prime Lenses.

This series of variable prime lenses opens many creative possibilities, since any focal length can be continuously selected throughout the entire range. The lenses offer sharp, high-contrast, high-resolution images with minimized vignetting, and are superior to many prime lenses.

Derek C. Lightbody of OpTex for the design and development of Aurasoft luminaires.

The Aurasoft offers a radical new type of reflector design for the production of soft, very even and relatively shadowless light, with superior coverage and significantly higher intensity than existing softlights.

Mark Roberts, Ronan Carroll, Assaff Rawner, Paul Bartlett and Simon Wakley for the creation of the Milo Motion-Control Crane.

This radically original and effective solution to the problems of high-speed camera motion was achieved with the combination of novel geometry and dedicated three-dimensional control software.

Michael Sorensen and Richard Alexander of Sorensen Designs International, and Donald Trumbull for advancing the state of the art of real-time motion-control, as exemplified in the Gazelle and Zebra camera dolly systems.

Over the past decade, Sorensen, Alexander and Trumbull have improved the speed, repeatability and portability of robotic camera platforms through novel engineering concepts and the pioneering use of composite materials.

Ronald E. Uhlig, Thomas F. Powers and Fred M. Fuss of the Eastman Kodak Company for the design and development of KeyKode latent-image barcode key numbers.

KeyKode numbers are machine-readable bar codes on camera negative film that exactly replicate the human-readable key numbers. Together with an appropriate reader and database software, they reduce errors and speed important postproduction operations, leading to significant cost savings.

Iain Neil, for the optical design, Takuo Miyagishima, for the mechanical design, and Panavision, Incorporated for the concept and development of the Primo Series of spherical prime lenses for 35mm cinematography.

The Primo Series of lenses for 35mm cinematography represents a thorough and comprehensive approach to prime lens design, development and manufacture. This family of lenses has a wide range of focal length, all color-matched, with improved modulation transfer function characteristics.

TECHNICAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS (Academy Certificates)

Garrett Brown and Jerry Holway for the creation of the Skyman flying platform for Steadicam operators.

This cable-driven, manned camera platform allows the operator to spin 360 degrees for unimpeded pans while controlling the downhill speed via brakes. As a device for achieving otherwise impossible shots, Skyman has had a definite influence on later cable-suspended camera systems.

James Rodnunsky, James Webber and Bob Webber of Cablecam Systems, and Thornton Bayliss for the design and engineering of Cablecam.

This radio-controlled, cabledriven camera platform, with its ultra-smooth synthetic cables and powerful hydraulic motors, enables runs in excess of 3,000 feet with quick return to start. Operating unmanned, it can function at speeds and through perils that would be unsafe for onboard operators.

DiFrancesco. Balasubramanian and Thomas L. Noggle for their pioneering efforts in the development of laser filmrecording technology.

Designed and used for motion pictures, this technology demonstrated the potential for recording digital data onto intermediate film stock.

Michael MacKenzie, Mike Bolles, Udo Pampel and Joseph Fulmer of Industrial Light & Magic for their pioneering work in motioncontrolled, silent camera dollies.

The quartet's silent, highspeed motion-control modification of a Panther dolly makes it possible to film moving-camera composite shots of actors while recording live dialogue.

Barry Walton, Bill Schultz, Chris Barker and David Cornelius of Sony Pictures Imageworks for the creation of an advanced motioncontrolled, silent camera dolly.

This extensive modification to the Panther dolly allows high-speed moves to be silent, smooth and stable.

Bruce Wilton and Carlos Icinkoff of Mechanical Concepts for their modular system of motioncontrol rotators and movers for use in motion control.

These components have become the de facto industry standard for use in precision motioncontrol equipment.

Remy Smith, for the software and electronic design and development, and James K. Branch and Nasir J. Zaidi for the design and development of the Spectra

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The design and execution of the Spectra Professional IV-A digital exposure meter has resulted in a practical and successful tool for the film production community.

Ivan Kruglak for his commitment to the development of a wireless transmission system for videoassisted images for the motion picture industry.

Through years of persistent effort, Mr. Kruglak has commercialized and popularized a technique of great utility for motion picture camera operations. By introducing diversity antennas and a time-code insertion accessory, he has optimized camera wireless video-assist components.

Dr. Douglas R. Roble for his contribution to tracking technology and for the design and implementation of the TRACK system for camera position calculation and

scene reconstruction.

The TRACK system is an integrated software tool that uses computer-vision techniques to extract critical 2-D and 3-D information about a scene and the camera used to film it.

Thaddeus Beier for the design and implementation of ras_track, a system for 2-D tracking, stabilization and 3-D camera and object tracking.

Ras_track allows the user to determine the position and location of the camera and objects in a scene by tracking points in a scanned sequence.

Manfred N. Klemme and Donald E. Wetzel for the design and development of the Microphone Boom Pole and accessories for on-set motion picture sound recording.

The K-TEK series microphone boom pole provides production recording personnel with a selflubricated, lightweight, sturdy pole with multiple accessories.

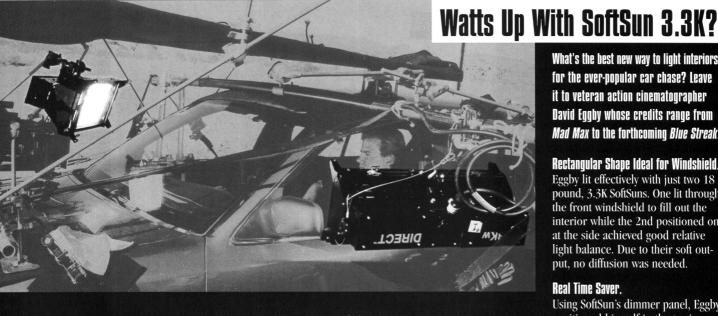
Nick Foster for his software development in the field of watersimulation systems.

This software technique provides an efficient and flexible method for the creation of flowing streams, oceans, tidal waves and turbulence for motion picture visual effects.

Cary Phillips for the design and development of the "Caricature" Animation System at Industrial Light & Magic.

By integrating existing tools into a powerful interactive system, and adding an expressive multitarget shape interpolation-based freeform animation system, the "Caricature" system provided a degree of subtlety and refinement not possible with other systems.

Dr. Mitch Bogdanowicz of the Eastman Kodak Company, and Jim



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What's the best new way to light interiors for the ever-popular car chase? Leave it to veteran action cinematographer David Eggby whose credits range from Mad Max to the forthcoming Blue Streak.

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Meyers and Stan Miller of Rosco Laboratories, Inc., for the design of the CalColor Calibrated Color Effects Filters.

Designed to correspond to the spectral sensitivity of color negative film stocks, these filters allow improved color control in motion picture lighting.

Dr. Carl F. Holtz, David F. Kopperl, Dr. A. Tulsi Ram and Richard C. Sehlin for the research and development of the concept of using molecular sieves to improve the archival properties of processed photographic film.

The use of zeolite crystals as molecular sieves to absorb moisture, acetic acid, methylene chloride and a variety of solvents created an effective deterrent to the effects of vinegar syndrome in stored film stock.

Takuo Miyagishima and Albert K. Saiki of Panavision, Inc., for the design and development of

the Eyepiece Leveler.

This leveler keeps the camera eyepiece at the same level, regardless of whether the camera position is tilted up or down, enabling the camera operator to concentrate on the composition of the image.

Edmund M. Di Giulio and James Bartell of Cinema Products for the design of the KeyKode Sync Reader.

The KeyKode Sync Reader provides a fast, accurate and user-friendly means of utilizing the KeyKode information on film, thereby expediting the editorial and postproduction processes.

Ivan Kruglak for his pioneering concept and the development of the Coherent Time Code Slate.

Time-code slates have had significant impact on the filmmaking process by simplifying postproduction. This development makes the synchronization process faster and more precise, particularly when multiple cameras are used.

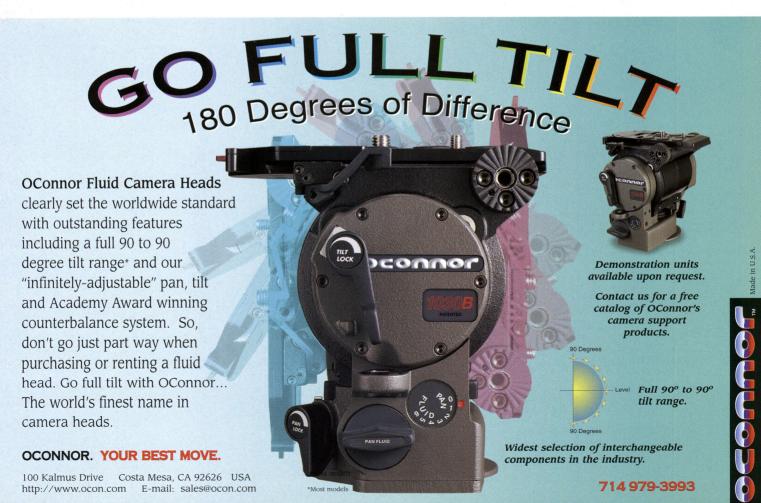
Mike Denecke for refining and further developing electronic time-code slates.

Due to their features and simplified operational procedures, the Denecke slates have had significant impact on the motion picture industry and have become the standard for electronic time-code slates.

Ed Zwaneveld and Frederick Gasoi of the National Film Board of Canada, and Mihal Lazaridis and Dale Brubacher-Cressman of Research in Motion for the design and development of the DigiSync Film KeyKode reader.

The DigiSync Film KeyKode Reader provides a fast, accurate and user- friendly means of utilizing the KeyKode information on film, expediting the editorial and postproduction processes.

— Christopher Probst



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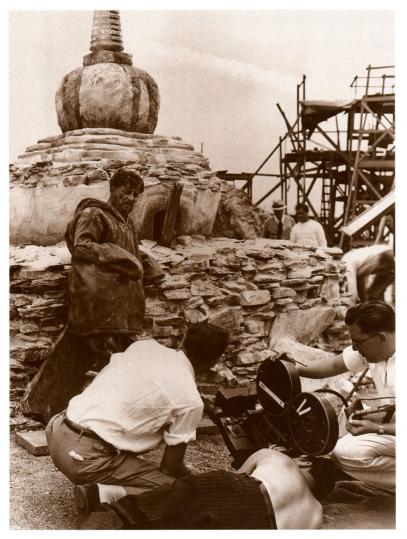
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Deja Valew



Many older motion pictures recycled footage from previous films to jazz up visuals on the cheap.

by Rudy Behlmer

t the beginning of the firstdraft script for Paramount's 1933 Zane Grey Western Man of the Forest, writer Jack Cunningham states: "The following layout, as to characters, sets, run of story, etc., is prepared with an eye to economy of production and the maximum use of film out of the [1926 Paramount] version." Cinematographer Ben Reynolds, ASC had become familiar with this procedure; during his career, he did four of the Zane Grey remakes for Paramount, and the use of lifted footage was always part of the plan (Archie Stout, ASC did seven Grey remakes).

For a cinematographer, preparing for an assignment of this



kind could involve a variety of preparations: heading into a projection room to study the picture from which footage would be borrowed; determining whether the footage was orthochromatic, which rendered some colors differently in black-and-white, or panchromatic; assessing whether diffusion discs or other filters were used; carefully noting the weather conditions in the original picture; and even having a Moviola on the set or location to aid in matching.

On projects with a short shooting schedule, where time was a key factor, many or all of the above steps could be, and often were, curtailed. The only thing that really mattered in such a situation was getting the new footage — hopefully on time and on budget.

The practice of using film shot for one picture in another has been around nearly since the beginning of motion pictures, but recycled images became particularly prevalent in the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s. All of the studios did it to one degree or another.

In the 1930s, Paramount made sound versions — many starring Randolph Scott — of their relatively elaborate silent Zane Grey Westerns of the 1920s. Henry Hathaway, who directed eight of the remakes, said: "They had been made as A-pictures

[in the 1920s] and now we were making B-pictures, utilizing footage from the originals, so I had to have some of the cast costumed the same as the silent players. We had to use every inch of stock footage we could for *Sunset Pass* [1933]. I had a lot of this silent mammoth cattle stampede, and I was supposed to cut in newly-photographed medium shots using about six cows. We couldn't afford any more. Eddie Dmytryk was the cutter." Dmytryk recalls that Paramount had a policy at the time of keeping the editor on the set or

location during filming days on all pictures. According to Dmytryk, he would do his cutting at the end of the day.

During that same decade, in addition to remaking several of their Zane Grev silents, Paramount built at least three other features around previous films they had made. Forgotten Commandments (1932) used 20 minutes of the biblical highlights from Cecil B. DeMille's 1923 Ten Commandments, with narration, music, and sound effects added. The commandments were certainly not "forgotten" - the main title stated that the new film "glorified by spectacular episodes from Cecil B. DeMille's epic The Ten Commandments."

Speaking of DeMille, Paramount's 1939 version of *Geronimo* used the storyline of that studio's *Lives of a Bengal Lancer* (1935). The tale was transplanted to the West and filled with a large percentage of Paramount footage from both sound and silent Westerns such as *The Texas Rangers* (1936), *Wells Fargo* (1937), *The Texans* (1938), *The Thundering Herd* (1925), and last but not least, DeMille's *The*

Opposite page: Filming Ronald Colman for a tiein shot to Demon of the Himalayas (1935) footage used in Lost Horizon (1937). Left: Ace aerial cinematographer Elmer Dyer, ASC with his twin Bell & Howells, photographing air action for The Dawn Patrol (1930), most of which was repeated in the 1938 remake. **Below: Twenty** minutes of footage from The Ten Commandments (1923) were lifted and put into Forgotten Commandments (1932).



Director King Vidor (with pith helmet) and crew members on location in **New Mexico for** The Texas Rangers (1936). The scene they are about ready to make involving a tribe of attacking Indians —was brought back for Geronimo! (1939).



Plainsman (1936). Regarding the latter, DeMille wrote to J. Karp in the legal department at Paramount, at the time of Geronimo's production, to inform him that "we have agreed to the use of 71 shots, amounting to 932 feet of film, or probably better than 10 percent of the entire length of Geronimo and material that could not be duplicated for \$150,000, which according to the assignment is given for good and valuable consideration — the good and valuable consideration being my affection for Paramount and the desire to serve its best interests wherever I possibly can, and I believe a reciprocal feeling on the part of Paramount."

The Plainsman footage used in Geronimo was all location-based second-unit work, directed by longtime DeMille associate Arthur Rosson.

Having purchased all rights to the Merian C. Cooper-Ernest B. Schoedsack films Grass (1925), Chang (1927), and The Four Feathers (1929), Paramount made liberal use of the highlights in The Last Outpost (1935) with Cary Grant and Claude Rains. The Jungle Princess (1936), Dorothy Lamour's first venture into a sarong, opened with the elephant stampede from Chang.

Paramount's most bizarre use of lifted footage was initiated by producer-director Frank Capra for his 1950 film Riding High. During the grim box-office slump in the spring of 1948, Paramount issued a dictum that no feature would cost more than \$2 million. After the studio turned down several of Capra's proposals, the director suggested the cost-cutting idea of trading a property that Paramount

owned, A Woman of Distinction, to Columbia for Broadway Bill, a 1934 picture that Capra had done at that studio. His plan was to cast Paramount's Bing Crosby in the Warner Baxter role, use a good deal of the horse-racing footage and other clips from Broadway Bill, and cast many of the same supporting players from that production, utilizing them in new footage as well as in shots from the old film's scenes without the new principals. Raymond Walburn, Clarence Muse, Douglass Dumbrille, Ward Bond, Frankie Darro, Margaret Hamilton, Paul Harvey, and Charles Lane were hired again and amazingly intercut with footage they had shot 15 years earlier!

To further compound the situation, cinematographer Ernest Laszlo, ASC was dismissed during the third week of filming, after alleged altercations with Capra. Laszlo (who had been recommended by Bing Crosby so that the star could be photographed more compatibly, agewise, with his 27-year-old co-star Coleen Gray) was replaced by George Barnes, ASC. Both cinematographers, with the aid of a Moviola on location and on the set, tried not to veer too far away from the original 1934 photography of Joseph Walker, ASC. The duo along with the makeup people went to great lengths to ensure that the age differences of the same supporting players wouldn't appear too jolting in the intercutting. To fully appreciate this curious mosaic, one should view both Broadway Bill and Riding High within a short span of time.

Earlier, Capra had acquired some outside footage for his 1937 epic production of Lost Horizon through the services of director Andrew Marton. Long shots of the wind-swept mountains, an avalanche, and the Ronald Colman , character (doubled by mountaineer Sepp Rist) making his way through the snowy wilderness came from two

German feature films, Storm Over Mont Blanc (1930), also known in the U.S. as Avalanche (1932), and Demon of the Himalayas (1935). The former title is one of the numerous mountain films that Arnold Fanck made throughout the 1920s and early 1930s. "I knew Storm Over Mont Blanc intimately because I was called in as a consultant and advicegiver for the editing part of it," recalled Marton. "From Demon of the Himalayas [made during an international Himalaya expedition in 1934], which I directed, they used a bit for the Ronald Colman character - in Demon it was played by Gustav Diessl — reaching a monastery, wearily collapsing in front of a religious emblem, and then being picked up by some honest-to-goodness real native Tibetans."

For the most part, the selected footage worked well. One instance of a giveaway is a match from a medium shot of the Colman character (actually Diessl) upon his arrival at a remote monastery, and the next medium close-up of Colman. Colman's hair and beard are relatively close-cropped; Diessl's are obviously bushier and longer.

At the end of the 1930s, Universal was making B-pictures on 10- or 11-day shooting schedules, with budgets of about \$70,000. Fortunately, there was plenty of good, recyclable footage on hand. For example, Zanzibar (1940) was conceived as a vehicle carefully built around two Universal Charles Bickford jungle melodramas, East of Borneo (1931) and East of Java (1935), as well as Universal's Nagana (1933), which had starred Tala Birell and Melvyn Douglas.

Cinematographer Milton Krasner, ASC had his hands full on *Zanzibar*. Martin Murphy, the production manager, reported on December 23, 1939: "On account of the nature of this production — the matching of so much stock [footage] stuff and combatting exterior condi-

tions during this time of year, etc. the company has worked long hours each day and into the night with only the 12-hour rest period, required by guild for actors, intervening... 11 shooting days plus six nights until 10:30 and later."

Over the years, Universal also used vast quantities of old footage for their horror films, serials, and Westerns. They also got considerable mileage from their Technicolor productions of *Arabian Nights* (1942) and *Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves* (1944) — mostly the latter.

Warner Bros. took a different approach. On April 30, 1938, executive Hal Wallis wrote to Jack Warner: "By using our exterior shots from the [original 1930 World War I air drama] *Dawn Patrol*, and just remaking the interiors, which consist almost entirely of the little headquarters shack, we should be able to remake the picture for a 'quarter'... and I think it would bring us a fortune now when the whole world is

talking and thinking war and rearmament."

Jack Warner gave the goahead, and on July 29 supervisor Robert Lord reported to Wallis that "Pete Steele at the [Warner] laboratory has just informed me that the original [1930 nitrate] negative... we intended using in The Dawn Patrol is in a badly shrunken and scratched condition... If we are unwilling to use dupes, there is really no use in going ahead with production plans. It is naturally out of the question [from a cost standpoint] even to think of doing all the flying and airdrome stuff over again." Most of the superb aerial photography had been done by specialist Elmer Dyer, ASC.

Whether the original 1930 negative or a dupe was eventually used is undetermined, but the final result of the blend between old and new footage is, for the most part, quite good. Of course, this was not a B-movie. Errol Flynn, David Niven,

What was good enough for *The Texas Rangers* was certainly good enough for an encore in *Geronimo!*



Right: A lobby card from Nagana (1933) places Tala Birell in dire peril. Below right: For Zanzibar (1940) Tala Birell transforms in the closer shots into Lola Lane — with Tom Fadden (left) and James Craig. Presumably Universal still had the same tree (or a reasonable facsimile) on hand.



and Basil Rathbone were the leads, and great care was taken by all throughout production of the film. The numerous rear-projection shots of the new actors working in specially rigged planes against the old air footage is particularly well-done.

Encouraged by the results, the studio used the same approach on two programmers. Indianapolis Speedway (1939), with Pat O'Brien and Ann Sheridan, was a remake of Warners' The Crowd Roars (1932), a Howard Hawks picture that had starred James Cagney and Joan Blondell. Copious car-racing footage was lifted from the original, and the use of rear-projection was abundant. Sid Hickox, ASC served as cinematographer on both pictures.

For Castle on the Hudson, a 1940 remake of the studio's 1933 picture 20,000 Years in Sing Sing (the former starred John Garfield and Ann Sheridan, while the latter had featured Spencer Tracy and Bette Davis), the procedure was outlined in a May 31, 1939, memo from unit manager Robert Fellows to supervisor Sam Bischoff: "... I just finished looking at the [original] picture with John Hughes, the art director, and Jack Killifer, the cutter... Killifer is having all the scenes printed up that can possibly be used again... Hughes has the stills from the original picture and is going to duplicate these sets that have to be built... By the selection of medium and long shots in the prison — even with the old principals in them, a considerable saving can be effected..."

In a later memo dated June 19, Fellows said, "Attached you will find a list of cuts [shots] that can be used in the remake... The director [Anatole Litvak can save a week's shooting

time by matching these selected cuts. This will require the use of a Moviola on the set and it will necessitate the casting office matching approximately the general size and build of some of the bit players, but it can save in the neighborhood of \$80,000 on the cost of the picture."

In this case, the procedures didn't work as well. Although some old footage was used, the subject matter didn't allow for prolific lifting, as aerial action and car racing had. (It's also possible that Litvak rebelled against using too much old film.)

We know that in certain instances, at least some studios were not averse to cutting out whole sequences of original negative from their older films to splice in portions with the negative of a new film. For example, all of the sea battles and other ships-at-sea footage from the 1924 production of The Sea Hawk were removed from the negative in the early or mid 1930s for possible use in Warners' remake of Captain Blood (1935) and/or the 1940 Sea Hawk. (Ironically, this footage was never used; although it was subsequently lost, it was recently found and restored).

Likewise, we know that the



intent was to use original negative from the 1930 Dawn Patrol for the 1938 remake. There is a great deal of evidence that Paramount cut into their Zane Grey negatives and those of other silent pictures (e.g. Volcano, 1926) so that the footage could be spliced into later productions. Many of Paramount's silent Zane Grey films do not survive today (neither negatives nor positives).

Until the late 1930s, blackand-white duplicating stock master positives (fine grains) and duplicating negatives — were of only fair quality; hence, there was a big temptation to go back to the original negative, particularly since in those pre-TV, pre-video days, old films on highly unstable and combustible nitrate stock were hazardous to store, and generally thought to have little or no value (with some rare exceptions).

During World War Warners' shorts department produced a group of two-reel Western subjects, featuring Robert Shayne, that were built around lifted footage - mostly from the studio's big Westerns. But sometimes problems were encountered. In a teletype sent by Jack Warner to the studio's New York office on April 13, 1944, the movie mogul wrote:

SAW TWO-REEL BLACK-AND-WHITE SHORT "TRIAL BY TRIGGER." THIS HAS MANY **FROM [FEATURE SCENES** PICTURES] "GOD'S COUNTRY AND THE WOMAN" [1936] AND "VALLEY OF THE GIANTS" [1938]...

ON "OKLAHOMA OUT-LAWS"... NOT KNOWING WE WERE GOING [TO] REISSUE KID" "OKLAHOMA [1939 FEATURE STARRING CAGNEY AND BOGART] AT THE TIME, HOLLY [PRODUCER GORDON HOLLINGSHEAD] USED 550 FEET OF LONG SHOTS FROM "OKLAHOMA KID"... HOLLY



HEARD THEY WERE PLAYING "OKLAHOMA KID" AND "OKLA-HOMA OUTLAWS" IN SOME THEATRES AT SAME TIME. PLEASE ISSUE ORDERS IMMEDI-ATELY THIS CEASES.

Some of the shorts used roughly the same stories in capsulated form. We can only speculate on the reaction of the audiences to this peculiar Oklahoma pairing.

Valley of the Giants, made in Technicolor, got quite a workout at the studio. A 1940 B-picture, King of the Lumberjacks, used heavy portions of the footage, which was converted to black-and-white; this was followed by the above-mentioned short, Trial by Trigger, and finally The Big Trees, a 1952 Technicolor production with Kirk Douglas that was intercut with many of the sequences from the 1938 Valley of the Giants.

After reissuing many of their previous hits, Warners got some additional mileage by incorporating generous servings of Technicolor footage from Dodge City (1939) into Fort Worth (1951), which starred

Randolph Scott. Another film, 1945's Frontier Days (previously a two-reel short), was also built around Dodge City extracts. Later, Dodge City's saloon brawl was revived for use in Warners' very economical blackand-white farewell to contract star Dennis Morgan, Cattle Town (1952), which also included footage of cattle stampedes taken from Montana (1950), Dodge City, and even The Big Stampede (1932), an early Warner John Wayne opus. (Illustrating the pervasive nature of this practice, the latter title incorporated footage from the 1927 Ken Maynard silent The Land Beyond the Law, which was remade again in 1937 — recycled shots and all — as a Warner Western starring Dick Foran!)

When Warners entered TV production in the mid-1950s, the good old reliable library footage was trotted out again and again particularly for the studio's Western series, such as Cheyenne, Maverick, Sugarfoot, and so on. Of course, all of the other studios did the same thing.

Before leaving the topic of Warners, here's an intriguing item Stuntman Wes Hopper's leap onto a moving log train for Valley of the Giants (1938) was repeated in at least three other films.

Deja V<mark>i</mark>ew

from the Things That Could Have Happened Department: On March 8, 1945, staff producer Jerry Wald wrote to Jack L. Warner's executive assistant Steve Trilling with a suggestion: "Why don't we make a musical out of [the 1938 The Adventures of] Robin Hood as a Dennis Morgan vehicle?... It would be a comparatively easy job to... write new songs for this wonderful outdoor spectacle. All the big production shots have already been made and would fit very nicely into any remake of this picture." Wald had many good ideas and made many fine films, but fortunately this particular inspiration was turned down.

Opulent MGM was not above

quite often; the studio was particularly keen on reusing footage from their 1930s and early 1940s Tarzan films and the 1950 King Solomon's Mines (see AC February 1987 and June 1989 for details).

Recycling musical numbers in new A-level musicals was definitely not a regular policy at MGM, but for the Red Skelton/Eleanor Powell I Dood It (1943), two previously used numbers by Powell were inserted as "new" production numbers, instead of originally planned fresh routines. One was part of Powell's Hawaiian medley from Honolulu (1939) — a hula-tap — and the other was a large chunk of her spectacular Born to Dance (1936) finale, "Swingin' the

I Dood It. In both she was in costumes and settings that did not date, and neither of the original films had been seen in years. In reviews that followed the release of I Dood It. not one mention was made of the familiarity of the numbers.

I Dood It was made when Powell's career at MGM was in decline, whereas Red Skelton's was rapidly ascending. According to inhouse MGM records, the picture cost \$1,135,000 and made a net profit of \$319,000. If the two originally scheduled new numbers by Powell had been produced, the studio would either have incurred a loss or broken even, at best.

When Richard Goldstone was

Eleanor Powell's production number finale from Born to Dance (1936) was brought back as the finale for I



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Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (he had been assistant head — and later head — of the MGM short subjects department in 1935), he was asked by Douglas Bell if the studio had ever tailored shorts to specific big features that were about to come out. Goldstone replied, "[Irving] Thalberg requested us, for one example, prior to the release of Mutiny on the Bounty [1935] to do just that. An Australian company had made a feature-length documentary called In the Wake of the Bounty [1933]. It was not shown in the U.S. Thalberg bought the rights, and we were asked to make not a trailer, but a one-reel short subject in the Carev Wilson series [Pitcairn Island Today, which utilized not only material from the documentary, but some material, without principals, from MGM's forthcoming feature. It was to be an interest builder, and it turned out to be very popular.

Right after Mutiny on the Bounty was released, there was enough interest to make a follow-up [Primitive Pitcairn]. So that sort of set a precedent."

The Australian documentary In the Wake of the Bounty begins in a tavern in 1810 where an old mariner recalls the history of the Bounty. In flashback, Tahitian scenes are shown, and soon a brief and unexciting mutiny takes place. The Bounty eventually arrives at the remote Pitcairn Island, and the scene dissolves to contemporary Pitcairn (circa 1933). Neither the undramatic and static flashback "historical" scenes shot on a stage in Sydney (with Errol Flynn, in his first screen role, playing Fletcher Christian), nor the Tahitian material, were used in the two MGM shorts.

When CinemaScope was introduced in the early 1950s, the use of old footage in feature films presented unique challenges. In 1955, producer-director Zoltan Korda remade the classic Four Feathers that the Korda brothers had done in 1939. Retitled Storm Over the Nile, it basically used the same script and virtually every possible inch of film from the '39 version, which had been photographed in Technicolor, to a large extent in the Sudan, by Osmond Borradaile, ASC (and Jack Cardiff, BSC).

For the new version, Ted Scaife, BSC served as cinematographer in England and the Sudan. All of the actors were replaced by popular British players of the 1950s. There was one hitch: the deal hinged on filming the new material in fashionable CinemaScope. Tests were thus made to see what could be done optically to change the original 1.33 to 1 configuration of the old footage to the CinemaScope aspect ratio of the time (2.55 to 1). Outstanding lifted

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sequences include the desert battles, with hordes of Sudanese troops riding either camels or horses charging the British, and the spectacular scenes on the Nile, with boats being hauled up the cataracts by Sudanese pulling on ropes. But the remake pales significantly in comparison with the wonderful overall perfection of the 1939 version, and the optical modifications of the old footage were not altogether satisfactory. At the time, director Korda complained to his nephew, Michael, that the anamorphic CinemaScope format "stretched the camels out until they looked like greyhounds."

Inspired by Mike Todd's Around the World in 80 Days (1956), producer-director Irwin Allen decided to try a similar approach with *The Story of Mankind* (1957). Lots of stars doing "vignettes" as historical figures through the ages, some giving presumably serious

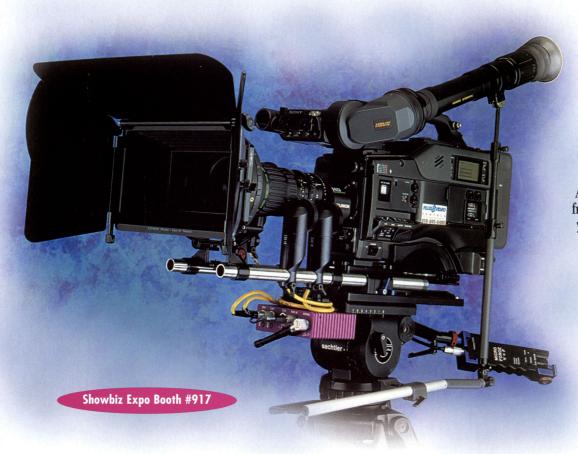
portrayals, and a few lending their roles a deliberately comic spin, are interspersed with miles of stock footage — producing a disconnected pageant that ranges over various periods of history. Among the historical figures portrayed are Cleopatra (Virginia Mayo), Joan of Arc (Hedy Lamarr), Isaac Newton (Harpo Marx), Nero (Peter Lorre), Napoleon (Dennis Hopper), Marie Antoinette (Marie Wilson), Shakespeare (Reginald Gardiner), Sir Walter Raleigh (Edward Everett Horton), Moses (Francis X. Bushman) and Hippocrates (Charles Coburn).

Spotting the film's profuse library footage (without the benefit of recognizable players) makes for a good game. I noted excerpts from Land of the Pharaohs, Helen of Troy, The Adventures of Robin Hood, King Richard and the Crusaders, The Private Lives of Elizabeth and Essex, Forever Amber, Captain Horatio

Hornblower, Drums Along the Mohawk, Dodge City, San Antonio, The Command, Gold Is Where You Find It, some Technicolor Warner Bros. historical Americana shorts of the late '30s and early '40s, and other titles not yet identified. (We anxiously await a "Letter to the Editor" from AC pen pal Rick Mitchell, and any others who can augment and/or correct this list.)

A troubled film — the early preview version ran for the intended release length of three hours — *Story* was eventually shown after heavy surgery at 100 minutes. Following brutal reviews, it quickly disappeared from theatres.

Of course, this survey has scratched only the surface of the recycled footage subject, presenting merely a few examples, not a definitive rundown. Serials alone would require several articles, and the same goes for vintage Westerns and televi-



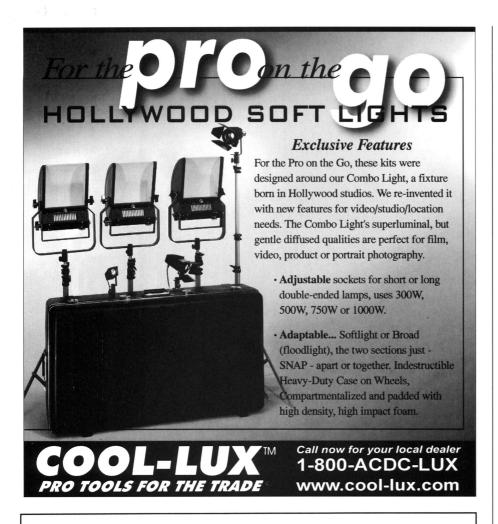
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sion series.

Even animated cartoons including Adventures of Popeye (1935), I'm in the Army Now (1936), Popeye's Premiere (1949) — got into the recycling act. Perhaps Popeye's original producer, Max Fleischer, and director, Dave Fleischer, were encouraged to adopt this procedure because of the success that their distributor, Paramount, had experienced with various recycled footage endeavors in the 1930s. Or maybe they got the idea from several of the Leon Schlesinger-Warner cartoons of the early 1930s, for which recycling was a standard operating procedure.

Resources

Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences' Center for Motion Picture Study (the Margaret Herrick Library staff): Paramount Collection, MGM Collection, Richard Goldstone Oral History, etc. University of Southern California, Warner Bros. Archives (Noelle Carter, Stuart Galbraith IV), University of Southern California Cinema-Television Library (Ned Comstock): Universal Collection, Jack L. Warner Collection, King Vidor Collection, MGM Collection. Directors Guild of America: Henry Hathaway Oral History, Andrew Marton Oral History. UCLA Film and Television Archive (Robert Gitt, Jere Guldin). And thanks to (alphabetically) Joe Adamson, Stacey Behlmer, Eddie Brandt, Joanne D'Antonio, Edward Dmytryk, Richard P. May, David Pierce and George E. Turner.

Short Takes

Blending Formats, and Cautionary Images

Sidewalk Minstrels by Stephanie Argy

Director Robert Duffy wanted the video for John Mellencamp's tune "I'm Not Running Anymore" to give viewers the visceral, immediate experience of the singer and his band performing on a streetcorner in Bloomington, Indiana. "From the beginning, Robert made it clear that he wanted the audience to feel an organic connection with John, his hometown and the environment that the band performed in," says cinematographer David Stockton. "He wanted the audience to feel that we were there with him, and sought to design a look that wouldn't detract from that by being too heavily stylized."

To capture the way that a person on the street might actually perceive the scene, Duffy and Mellencamp came up with the idea of a breaking the frame into much smaller images, then assembling them into a moving collage on a black background, like a David Hockney photo montage come to life.

Stockton points out that when we are in a real place, we intrinsically absorb the world around us, and though we naturally focus on whatever it is we're paying attention to, our peripheral vision constantly keeps us aware of our surroundings. To capture the same feeling filmically. Duffy decided to shoot the performance of the song with multiple cameras. Several central cameras would focus on Mellencamp and the band, while others would grab apparently random details of the surrounding scene, in the same way our peripheral vision might pick them up. "Our peripheral collage gave us the sense of being in a real place, while the central cameras gave us what we were focusing on,"



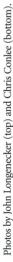
savs Stockton.

Just as our peripheral vision seems softer and less acute than our central vision, the filmmakers felt that the peripheral cameras in this arrangement should gather softer images as well. They accomplished that objective by using 16mm cameras for the central view, and Super 8 cameras for the surrounding material. Notes Stockton, "We felt that the slight image softness

of the Super 8 format would actually support the aesthetic of a surrounding peripheral field of view, punctuated by higher-resolution primary angles."

Cinematographer John Longenecker (an Academy Award winner for the 1970 live-action short *The Resurrection of Broncho Billy*) joined the project to handle the Super 8 footage. Longenecker specializes in second-unit work (using 35mm, 16mm and Super 8), and owns a

A rectangular frame made of speedrail was employed to hold the multiple cameras used to film the "I'm Not Running Anymore" video. An array of Super 8 units captured specific details while the central image was shot in 16mm. The various shots were then pieced together to form a photo mosaic.











Frames from the the finished video, composed of images shot simultaneously from various angles. number of 16mm and Super 8 cameras, which he often uses on music videos (he has shot second unit on the last nine videos for recording artist/director Dwight Yoakam). For the "I'm Not Running Anymore" clip, his Super 8 camera arsenal included a Beaulieu 6008S and seven Canon 1014XL-S units. "The Canons are my workhorses on music videos," Longenecker says. "They're rugged, don't break down, have a 10:1 zoom, and mine are modified for 24 fps crystal-sync." He adds that the lens, which is fast and sharp, can also focus at very close distances.

To create a proscenium for the video, Stockton had a 6' x 8' rectangular frame built out of speedrail. Longenecker's Super 8 cameras were mounted on the frame, while two Arriflex 16SRs were positioned behind the speedrail rig, aimed through the center of it. These were sometimes supplemented by five other 16mm cameras provided by Longenecker: an Arri 16BL, two Canon Scoopic 16MS's and two Beaulieu R16s.

In designing their shots, Duffy and Stockton would start by setting a frame with the speedrail rectangle. Looking through it at the scene, they would position the 16mm cameras behind it and find the primary shots. These shots were generally two wide, complimentary frames arranged so that when Mellencamp or any other band member stepped to the right or left, they would move from one field of view to the other. "Our Super 8 cameras picked up everything on the boundaries, collecting information about the world," says Stockton. "Utilizing the frame, we would just piece together the peripheral information, based on what was visible through the rectangle. For the most part, the environment revealed itself to us. and we tried not to overthink how we allowed ourselves to gather that information "

To show the crew how he envisioned the shots coming together, Duffy did some sketches, and also made still collages. Stockton explains, "He took images from his tech scout photographs, cut them into pieces and layered them on top of each other. That gave the rest of us an idea of how he envisioned these individual frames being layered on top of and around each other."

Though Duffy had some specific images in mind — a "Don't Walk" sign, a foreground car passing from frame left to frame right through the view of six different cameras — Stockton says that the director was also very open to the crew's contributions. "He encouraged all of us to stretch our imaginations in terms of how we perceived this environment."

Stockton says that the hardest thing for him as a cinematographer was envisioning the different images as part

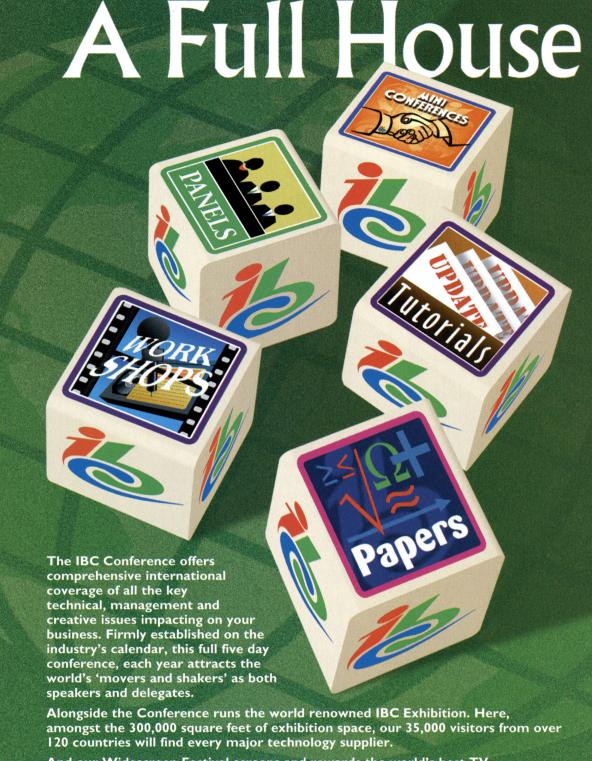






of a larger collage. "The frames were never designed to be complete on their own. They were always intended to be part of a greater whole," he says. "The challenge was previsualizing a final compilation of images piece by piece. That was the most interesting thing for me — to previsualize and then think backwards, in smaller and smaller elements. It was more about capturing individual moments that would be assembled later."

Naturally, this went against everything Stockton had learned in his career. "So often, you're asked to create



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dynamic frames that carry the story, especially in the music video and commercial market," he says. On the Mellencamp video, he had to be comfortable not making each frame action-packed, knowing that each would be one small piece of a larger puzzle. "An out-of-focus streetlight in the backaround, which on its own would render very little sense of place and purpose, became a cohesive proscenium when combined with all of the other pieces." he says. "It's an interesting challenge to be forced to look deeper for your motivation of a frame, because the techniques one might employ to create a striking image would actually detract from the ultimate goal."

Just as Stockton had to make each individual frame much simpler than he ordinarily might, he also used a simple shooting style, rather than the extreme stylization that might have been appropriate on another type of project. "A lot of the photography [was intended] to *not* draw attention to itself," he says.

In the middle of the song is a short musical break, which Duffy used to divide the video into two halves, the first shot during the day, the second at night. As a result, Stockton used two different stocks for the 16mm cameras, and two others for his Super 8 units. "The primary photography for the daytime portion was done with Kodak 7246 [Vision 250], which is a very impressive emulsion," says Stockton. "We used the 200T 7274 Vision stock in the principal cameras for the night sequence."

For the Super 8 footage, Longenecker used Pro-8 45 negative stock (which is re-manufactured from Kodak EXR 5245 by Super8 Sound in Burbank, California) for the day sequences, and Pro-8 93 (made from EXR 5293) for the night work. Though they also shot one roll of reversal Kodachrome 40, though Longenecker reports that for productions with a tight deadline, Kodachrome is problematic to use because many labs have stopped processing it for environmental reasons, and it has to be sent away for developing. (The Pro-8 negative stocks were processed at Super8 Sound's in-house lab facility.)

The project's filtration and lighting were fairly straightforward as well. Stockton says he simply used a polarizer to deepen the sky, and neutral-density filters to create a shallow depth of field. "The filtration was intended not to draw attention to a style, but to capture a good clean negative," he explains. "The lighting style for the night sequence basically Kino Flo footlights hidden by snowdrifts — allowed us to create low. motivated pools of lights, as opposed to an overall source, to create a moodier feeling. That style also allowed us to light a master shot and move in for cover shots with very little change from band member to band member."

In the end, of course, the images all came together during the editing process. Stockton says he was amazed by Duffy's ability to arrange the footage that had been shot: "I was very impressed with Robert's skill at previsualizing how this mosaic would come together, and how it would expand and contract in its scope as he assembled it. It was clear to me that it was put together by chance or accident — the final result was exactly what he had described in the beginning."

Stockton affirms that though the video seems casually put together, the construction was not random or haphazard. "It's remarkably constructed," he says, adding that even apparently trivial details, such as the flashing "Don't Walk" signs, are all carefully combined to create a complete impression. "When I watch the video, I feel that I'm there on that streetcorner with John and the band.

"One of the most rewarding things about being a cinematographer these days is the limitless palette that we have at our disposal," says Stockton. "It's a very fertile time creatively, because the sky is the limit. The audience has become open to anything, which offers artists in this medium a boundless opportunity to look within ourselves. It's really an exciting time to explore the craft of filmmaking, and it's nice to work with people like John and Robert, who are trying to push those boundaries themselves."

Taking Tobacco Companies to Task

by Linda Whalen

It has been 26 years since the FCC banned cigarette commercials from television — a fact not lost on Jeff Goldsmith, who recently directed "Cancer Cash," a strong anti-smoking Public Service Announcement. wanted to get away with murder," says Goldsmith, whose spot implies that tobacco companies have done just that over the years. In ultra-glamorous game show style, the PSA plays on tobacco company promotions like "Camel Cash." Rather than jackets, towels, and T-shirts, however, smokers who collect enough "Cancer Cash" exchange it for items like chemotherapy and coffins.

Health groups have long been concerned that tobacco company giveaways glamorize smoking and ignore health dangers, targeting young people and encouraging them to smoke. Geared toward the same audience, the PSA uses dark humor to focus young people on the very real effects of cigarette use.

A native of Kansas, Goldsmith earned a degree from USC in Theater and Film in the early Ninties. He and director of photography Steve Adcock hooked up a couple of years later, when the former was helming a music-video project, and the duo began a collaboration that continues today.

Adcock credits Goldsmith's drive and marketing skills for getting the high concept "Cancer Cash" project shot on a bare-bones budget. When Goldsmith pitched the American Cancer Society, he came prepared with a treatment, script, storyboards and meticulous research. The ACS was impressed enough to give him a letter of support, which Goldsmith and his company, Unlikely Films, used to procure pro bono contributions from equipment and service providers, including Otto Nemenz, Universal City Studios, Xenotech and Digital Domain.

Individual experiences varied among cast and crew, but all had one thing in common: the desire to send a message to young people about the potential dangers of smoking. Actress \$6,143.⁰⁰

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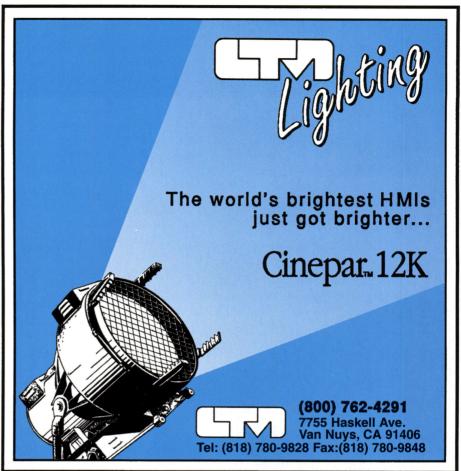
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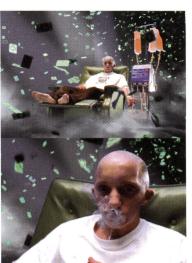
An array of images from the inventive PSA "Cancer Cash," which lambastes cigarette company propaganda with pitch-black humor

Marissa Johnson, diagnosed with a potentially fatal lung condition, still struggles with a three-pack-a-day habit she's had since the age of 13. Voiceover artist John Frost wore a nicotine patch during his recording session. Video effects supervisor Mark Larranaga is convinced that his parents' two-pack-a-day habit contributed to his lifelong asthma. All of these people donated their time and energy.

Goldsmith seems to successfully ride the line between control freak and collaborator by virtue of his boundless enthusiasm and impressive store of knowledge. "The nice thing about working with Jeff is that he knows exactly what he wants, and he's very proficient technically," says Adcock. Goldsmith also recognizes a good suggestion when he hears one, however; while shooting components of the final scene. Adcock suggested that rather than have an actor in the spot exhale a lungful of smoke before disappearing, he should inhale the cloud, and then dissolve. Goldsmith loved the idea, and the resulting image is stark and chilling.

Given the "the keys to the backlot" at Universal, Goldsmith and art director Nicole Lee came upon an abstract green neon light, which they decided was a perfect background for the opening shot. The neon light was placed on a brick wall flat to simulate a back-allev nightclub entrance. Adcock mounted a Xenon lamp behind the wall. and set a mirror over the actors to create the hot, slightly exaggerated look of a streetlamp. To eliminate the hard line of the neon, and to keep the background slightly out of focus, Adcock used a 200mm Nikon lens, moving the camera as far back as possible to add depth.

A mirror ball swirls over a coffin display, sparkling and sending dappled light dancing around the background. Adcock and gaffer C.E. Courtney rigged two mirror balls for the shot, one in and one out of frame. Both balls were lit with a 4K Xenon and spun simutaneously, producing a disco effect. As the coffin spins around the turntable, a gleam of light follows the chrome edge, while Adcock's star filter gives it the perfect



"ding" of a game-show prize.

Making the most of what he has to work with seems to be Adcock's forte. When shooting the coffin at eye level didn't quite work, the cameraman spotted a scissor lift at the back of the sound-stage. He soon pressed the lift into service, using it as a crane for the next two shots.

To shoot the PSA's four sets, Adcock employed a Arri-35 III fitted with a 35mm prime. Universal provided both electricity and a tungsten lighting package. A 4K Xenon light was employed strategically to give the piece a hardedged look. Kodak's Vision 500T 5279 film (also donated) was used, Adcock says, "for its strong blacks and all-around versatility." Since the entire spot was shot MOS, and because Adcock and gaffer Courtney know each other so well, the crew leapfrogged ahead of Adcock, saving critical time during the one-day shoot

Goldsmith also relied on story-boards to keep his costs down, particularly for a shot that ostensibly takes place on a football field. After realizing that building the field on a soundstage was as unlikely as it was impractical, the filmmakers opted for a more creative approach. Adcock lit the shot's actor, who prances around the field in an oxygen mask and tanks, with two 20Ks through a silk, and again employed the scissor lift, placing the camera directly above the actor and shooting straight down onto a patch of green astroturf.

In the spot's only dolly shot, a pullback from a tropical sunset reveals an actress reclining on a deckchair and sporting a swimsuit, a full tracheal tube (illuminated from within by a disco-style string of light-emitting diodes) and a ventilator. The painted sunset on the backdrop was warmed by positioning a 5K directly behind the "sun," and aiming it straight at the camera. Adcock then bounced a pair of Maxi-Brutes off a 4' x 4' Griffolyn to add a warm glow. Rim-lighting the actor with a 10K and full CTS gel completed the soft look of sunset.

To cap the spot, Goldsmith had envisioned a final image of a young chemotherapy patient who disappears, like the smoke he inhales, into a void filled with smoke amid a hail of falling "Cancer Cash." When this idea proved too difficult to shoot practically, given the project's limited time and budget, the filmmakers opted for a bluescreen shot. Once the background was set for true blue with the help of seven Kino Flo lightbanks, Adcock began shooting the elements needed for the final edit. "Cancer Cash" bills, dropped from the scissor lift, were shot in the foreground, midground and background of the set, and later converted to a slow, constant frame rate on a Flame station in post. The green cash was backlit to minimize the reflection of the bluescreen on the glossy paper, and to create some highlights as it fell.

Adcock set up the dissolve "the old-fashioned way." First, he shot the actor in his chair in front of the bluescreen. After locking off the camera, he drew the outline of the actor on the video monitor, took the actor out of the shot, and shot the chair alone. To blow out the bluescreen reflecting off the green vinyl chair, Adcock lit the chair with the 4K Xenon. Finally, he removed the chair from the set and replaced the actor, now perched on apple boxes, in the position outlined on the monitor. The resulting match-cut dissolve shifts the parody into a mood of stark seriousness.

To facilitate the effects work for this image, Mark Larranaga of Digital Domain, who doubled as the visual

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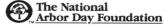
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New Products & Services

compiled by Andrew O. Thompson and Christopher Cooling

Preserving Negatives for the Next Generation

Hollywood Vaults uses 21stcentury tactics, including stateof-the-art cold storage, to preserve 20th-century images.

by Jay Holben

In the 1950s, as highly volatile nitratebased films were supplanted by more stable triacetate-based "safety film," the film industry began operating under the belief that cinematic imagery would last forever. However, many companies reaching for projects from even the recent past for video or theatrical rerelease are discovering that their film masters are in deplorable condition. (This sad state of affairs was evidenced by the extensive restoration work required on the 1977 film Star Wars — see AC Feb. '97.) At best, movies of an advanced age show moderate to considerable fading in overall color saturation; at worst, they are a total mess, reduced to irreparable devastation in the form of crystalline powder. The culprit is a fairly recently diagnosed disease that has claimed the lives of innumerable pictures: acrid efflux.

Known commonly as "vinegar syndrome," (see "Attack of the Vinegar Syndrome" and "Film Preservation: A Practical Guide" in AC June '96), the degradation of cellulose triacetate-based motion picture film is caused by the film base's chemical decomposition. Motion picture film is created by combining large amounts of acetic acid with natural fiber chains (composed of glucose molecules obtained from such sources as cotton and flax) and a plasticizer to form a solid. clear film base upon which the lightsensitive emulsion is lavered. As triacetate film (so dubbed because three acidic molecules are attached to each



The bunker-like state-of-the-art storage facilities at Hollywood Vaults employs both structural and operational design to safeguard today's films for tomorrow's audiences.

glucose fiber chain) decomposes, it returns to its former state of separate portions of cellulose and acetic acid: this is the same organic compound that gives a characteristically sour taste and smell to vinegar. The vapor emitted from the acid gives off this strong odor (hence the term "vinegar syndrome").

This degenerative process is caused by hydrolysis: acetate ions in the film's base absorb atmospheric moisture, and the chemical combination breaks down the acid's connection with the



cellulose. The amount of moisture available for base absorption is determined by the air's percentage of relative humidity (RH). To add insult to injury, this cancer-like disease is "autocatalytic," feeding upon itself exponentially until the base can no longer support the emulsion. Currently, there's no cure for this carcinomatous killer, but fortunately, the process can be retarded (and even halted) indefinitely.

Fortunately, the upscale storage facility at Hollywood Vaults is fighting the good fight against triacetate base degradation. Its seismically-reinforced concrete walls house an environmentally-controlled sanctuary for the safekeeping and preservation of precious images. Designed and built in 1985 by former filmmaker David Wexler, Hollywood Vaults is a safe haven for all types of media elements — motion picture negatives and intermediates. photographic prints, audio/video tapes and digital storage materials. Wexler, who is considered to be a leader in the field of vaulting, has done consulting work for the Federal Safe Deposit

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Hollywood Vaults offers 0°F cryogenic storage for clients who require the best possible preservation of their materials. Kodachrome transparencies held here are predicted to last for more than 32,000 years without noticeable image degradation.

Company of Beverly Hills, Walt Disney Studios, Paramount Pictures, Eastman Kodak, Technicolor Film Laboratory and the Survivor of the Shoah Visual History Foundation, among others. He is a member of AFI, SMPTE, the Society of American Archivists, the Material Handling and Management Society, the American Society for Industrial Security and the Association of Moving Image Archivists.

"This facility was built specifically for this purpose — it isn't a converted warehouse," Wexler explains. "We built it with all-concrete construction: from the foundation to the cinderblock and pre-cast walls to a concrete roof. You'd be hard pressed to find any combustibles in the physical makeup of the building. We also have a comprehensive Halon fire-suppression system that is installed throughout the building — not just in the vault rooms, but in the bathrooms, storage areas, electrical and phone closets. Most facilities with Halon systems only use them in specified areas. But fires don't necessarily start in controlled areas, they start in a utility closet or in a janitorial space. Therefore, we protect the entire building with the same Halon system that we use to protect the vaults."

Wexler's fervor for the protection of his clientele's material doesn't end with fire suppression. Hollywood Vaults also features a top-of-the-line security system that allows its customers worryfree, 24-hour-a-day entry. Visitors come into the facility through a ground-level, secured parking garage accessed with a personal identification number on a security keypad outside the main gate. Once they're inside, another security keypad awaits a PIN entry before the main doors slide open; a client must also deal with two additional security keypads before obtaining access to his or her specified storage space within the vault itself. More than 20 closed-circuit TV cameras are strategically placed throughout the building, and a 24-hour off-site security station constantly monitors the building for smoke, fire, flooding, temperature changes, humidity and intrusion. Wexler even takes the security one step further by inhibiting particle and dust intrusion. In the garage's loading area, a handy pneumatic air hose hangs on the wall to blow dust from any materials brought into the building. Once past the main doors, the client passes through an air curtain that forces any stray dust particles down into a metal dirt-trap in the floor. No expense has been spared to

deter unwanted visitors (animate or inanimate) from entering the facility.

"We are also unique because we offer the client their own individual space," says Wexler. "Most vaults work on a different model, in which all film goes into a common warehouse. Instead, we give the client more control over their material — a specific space and exclusive access to that space 24 hours a day. When the client closes their space — it's closed and locked until they return - no one else has access to those materials. Other vault companies will pick up and deliver elements to the client, and inventory what the client has in storage, but all elements are out of the producer's hands. and hence out of their control.

"Some people like the idea of being able to pick up the phone and say, 'Pull that element and ship it to my New York office.' Our clients tend to want more control over their material. They're uncomfortable with the idea of having it in a van going across town, sitting on a loading dock or having it mixed in with everybody else's material. We offer 11 different sizes of exclusive storage spaces tailored to the clients' specific space and economic needs."

Five large rooms feature floor-toceiling vaults that reach up to 42' long by 9' high by 2' deep. These Swiss-made, high-density mobile shelving units can be completely customized to a client's individual needs to maximize capacity. Overall, the facility provides storage options ranging from "media safes" (one cubic foot of space that can hold an estimated 500 floppy disks or 35 small Betacam tapes for \$65 per month) to a "double vault" (756 cubic feet of space that can store 4,700 1,000' 35mm film cans or 21,560 Betacam tapes for \$1,350 per month). Each client maintains his or her own space, and is free to organize it in any manner desired. There are no setup, access or retrieval fees whatsoever, since all handling is done by the individual client.

Aside from these Fort Knox-like security measures, Hollywood Vaults also features stringent environmental controls. The storage spaces are all kept

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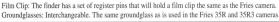


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at a constant temperature of 45°F with 25 percent RH. This low, "bone-dry" humidity removes almost all moisture from the air, thereby eliminating the possibility of a vinegar syndrome outbreak. "Dryness is key for film preservation," asserts Wexler. "As it turns out, it is also key to the preservation of magnetic media. Even though the chemistry [of magnetic media] is different [than that of film], video- and audiotape both use an organic hygroscopic polyurethane-type binder to hold the magnetic information onto the polyester base. It's that binder which is susceptible to moisture. If the binder absorbs too much moisture, the oxide begins to flake off the polyester base and you lose the information. If the tape is kept dry, you can keep the binder intact and keep it performing for years."

Each of the five vaults contain Munters Cargocaire desiccant wheel dehumidifiers. The Cargocaire units maintain archival-quality humidity levels via large silicon-impregnated honeycomb wheels that absorb moisture from the air and drive it out of the building. Twentyfive percent relative humidity is a median level that prevents elements from absorbing moisture, yet allows in enough dampness to maintain the elements' good condition. If the relative humidity runs below 20 percent, conditions are too dry and can cause the film base to become dangerously brittle.

When Hollywood Vaults was constructed in 1985, it originally housed four large vaults that quickly filled to capacity. For over 10 years, the facility operated with no vacancy: prospective clients had to be placed on a waiting list. In 1997, Wexler expanded the facilities with a new wing that features all the same environmental and security levels as its predecessor, but with a few new attributes. "We've added a very sophisticated air filtration system that not only scrubs the air for particulates, but it also uses Molecular Sieve technology to scrub the air for acetic acid and other chemicals that promote film deterioration," notes Wexler. "If elements come into the vault already in a state of decomposition due to poor storage, or if there is lab residue on them, we can remove those substances from the air and prevent other film stored here from being affected."

The Molecular Sieve technology utilized in Wexler's air-purification system was developed in cooperation with the Image Permanence Institute and the Eastman Kodak Company's FPC division. The Sieves are also available from FPC in a smaller size for placement within individual sealed film cans. Their presence can extend a triacetate film's lifespan considerably. Each Sieve is held in a semi-permeable packet of Tyvek which allows vapors to be easily scavenged and contained.

Proper temperature is another major factor of Hollywood Vaults' archival environment. Color dves within negative and print films are even less stable than the acetate base, and can fade rather quickly in warm environments. To hinder breakdown and organic dye fading, films need to be stored in cold climates. Wexler explains, "We first built the facility at 50/50 [50°F and 50 percent relative humidity] because that was what the current research dictated in 1985. Then, based on the research of Eastman Kodak and the Image Permanence Institute [a division of the Rochester Institute of Technology and the Society for Imaging Science and Technology], we realized that film needs to be kept colder and dryer to prevent breakdown. We lowered the temperature to 45°F and lowered the humidity to 25 percent RH. We chose 45/25 as a great median temperature that will satisfy most people's needs. We chose a middle ground because we have such a wide array of materials, including photographs, documents, artwork, films and tapes. At 45°, you don't have to worry about staging the materials out of storage into normal room temperature condensation isn't really a problem. But, for those situations in which 45° isn't cold enough — as in the case of already partially deteriorated material, or something that will be culturally significant for generations to come — we also offer 0°F storage in cryogenic freezers."

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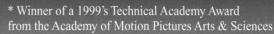
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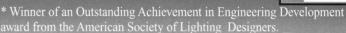
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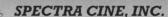
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perspective, the Image Permanence Institute offers a slide chart that calculates decay rates based upon varying states of temperature and humidity. Modern acetate-based film stored at a stable room temperature of 70°F with 60 percent RH will incur a 30 percent image loss in as little as 25 years. If the RH is lowered to 30 percent, a loss of nearly 1/3 will take 100 years. At 45°F with 25 percent RH, decay time increases to more than 1,325 years. Kodachrome transparency emulsion (considered one of the most stable films) maintained at a temperature of 0°F is predicted to last more than 32,000 years without noticeable picture degradation.

All of the facility's vault enclosures are kept at dark storage conditions. Lights are activated by occupancy sensors that turn off when vaults are unoccupied, thus preventing any photorelated detriments from affecting stored materials. Although the building is prepared for just about everything (the structural reinforcements are designed

to withstand floorloads of 450 pounds per square foot — nine times the normal seismic requirements), Wexler does not employ a backup power generator. In his view, a large diesel tank within the facility poses a potentially greater risk than does loss of power to the vaults. "As long as the doors are closed, the vaults will hold their temperature for several days with no power. Our whole design philosophy has been to use very high-quality materials with high durability and low maintenance requirements so that the client can always gain access to their space — 24 hours a day, seven days a week whether someone is here or not."

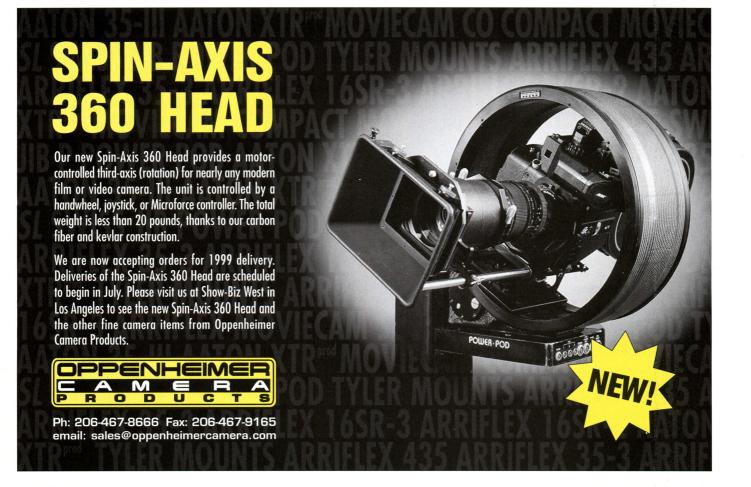
In a finishing touch to the facility's environment, Wexler provides complimentary parkas for clients to wear while in the vaults' cold environment. Music is piped into the building from digital broadcast, and if the client's tastes differ from what's being played, the ambient sounds can be overridden via a CD player at the client's workstation. Also provided

are complimentary office supplies along with a phone, fax, Internet access, a label-maker and even a radiant heater below the work counter to warm your legs after you've traipsed through the frigid facility.

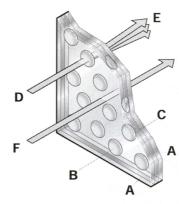
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Schneider has introduced a unique new line of diffusion filters that employ a built-in optics system to erase unwanted wrinkles and blemishes without compromising the image sharpness of high-quality modern lenses. The Classic Soft filters are manufactured using diamond-cut optical glass that is precision-ground and polished to ensure uniformity and consistency. Sandwiched between two pieces of this glass are hundreds of precision micro-lenslets, which provide a precisely controlled soft image that is overlaid on a sharp, infocus image. During use, the light pass-







ing through the micro-lenslets is slightly refracted, while light passing between them is unaffected (see diagram). This combination diffuses the image while maintaining overall sharp focus. The size, number and spacing of the micro-lenslets determine the amount of diffusion that is achieved.

In the normal range of exposure, the Classic Soft filter imparts only a closely confined, subtle glow to highlights. If large amounts of overexposure Far left: The **Classic Soft** filter's built-in micro-lenslets can be seen. Left: Sandwiched between two pieces of optical glass (A) are hundreds of micro-lenslets (B). Air gaps (C) are eliminated when the entire assembly is fused together. During use, image light that passes though each micro-lenslet (D) is slightly refracted (E), while light passing between the lenslets (F) is unaffected.



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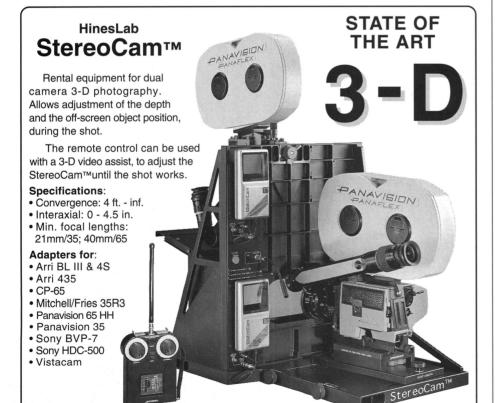
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HinesLab, Inc., Glendale, CA ph. 818-507-5812, fax 818-507-8537 www.hineslab.com (such as a "blown-out" window) exist in a shot, the filters add a distinct glow that keeps the shot's contrast under control while adding a romantic look. As with all Schneider filters, the Classic Softs are designed to be used in front of a long lens, singly or in combination with other filters in order to make combinations for even greated creative control.

Schneider currently offers the Classic Soft filters in 4" x 4", 4" x 5.650" (Panavision) and 6.6" x 6.6" sizes, and five strengths: ½, ½, ½, 1 and 2. An optional Maxi-Tran multi-coating is also available for the Classic Soft filters, maximizing the transmission of light while reducing flare and improving color and contrast. All filters are tested with a laser interferometer to ensure exact flatness and the parallel relationship between both sides.

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Chemical Kits

Kodak's Professional Motion Imaging division presents a new line of premixed film processing and development chemicals for use in motion picture film labs. The ECN-2 Kit Chemistry reduces the need for in-house chemical analysis through its all-liquid chemical basis. The premixed kits also represent a tangible safety improvement, as they prevent lab employees from having to handle powdered chemicals: simply adding water to Kodak's package ensures a consistent mix with every use. The new kits will be available in a variety of container sizes, making them beneficial to smaller labs lacking storage space for large quantities of premixed chemicals. The kits' compatibility with automatic chemical feeders also represents a potential for increased efficiency.

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Highest-Speed Super 8 Neg

Super8 Sound now offers their Pro-8/89 800T, a camera stock which is remanufactured for the Super 8 format

from Kodak's Vision 5289 — a 35mm color negative rated at 800 ASA in tungsten light. (See New Products in *AC* Nov. 1998 for complete details.) Though similar in grain structure and sharpness to the Pro-8/79 500T (made from 5279), Pro-8/89's increased speed allows for filming in even lower light situations. Pro-8/89 is available in 50' cartridges that will work in most existing Super 8 cameras, and the Burbank, California-based company offers same-day processing and telecine dailies.

Super8 Sound, (818) 848-5522, fax (818)848-5956, website: www. super8sound.com.

Sachtler Camera Head

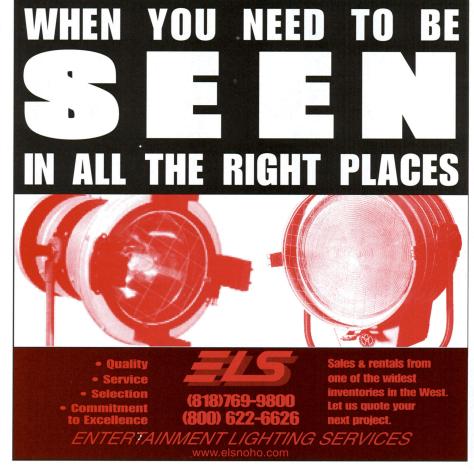
Sachtler's new DV 4 XD system consists of the eponymous fluid head, a DA 75 tripod, and an SP 75 spreader, and weighs a total of 11 lbs. (5 kg.). The fluid head itself offers five-step fluid damping and five- step counterbalance from 4.4 to



13 lb (2 to 6 kg). What results is a variety of payload possibilities, all designed to accommodate camera operators who work with fluctuating combinations of additional batteries and/or on-board lights. The fluid head also offers a series of different drag steps, enabling it to meet the decreased drag strength required by such lighter digital cameras as Panasonic's AG-EZ10/15, Sony's VX 1000/9000 and Canon's XL-1.

Sachtler, (089) 321-58-200, fax (089) 321-58-227.





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Mag Junior shown with Top & Bottom Shelves, Adjustable Nose, 8" Wheel Conversion Kit, Hi/Lo Hat Holder, Tripod Holder and Mitchell Mount.

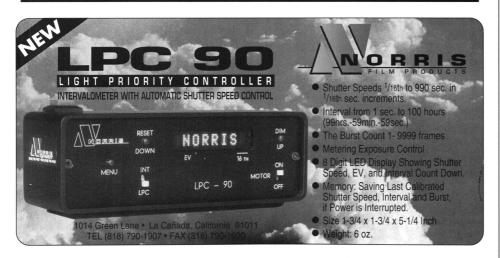


Mag Senior shown with Top and Bottom Shelves, HD Nose, Grip/Light Caddy, Handles, 8" Wheel Conversion Kit, Dual Axle Kit, Video Pin, Video Bracket and 9" Monitor Trays.



Mag Junior shown with Top Sound Tray, Top, Middle & Bottom Shelves, Adjustable Nose, Sliding Drawer w/ Lock, Cable Hook, Mike Boom Pole Holder and 8" Wheel Conversion Kit w/ optional Sand Dune Wheels.

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Equipment Emporium introduces the new Robopole boompole holder, a compact, sturdy metal device for use with a standard grip head. The piece is threaded for use with an optional aluminum C-clamp, or for direct hanging from an overhead wooden beam. The



device has been designed specifically to minimize damage to boompoles, employing a protective rubber coating to prevent clamps that can be accidentally overtightened.

Equipment Emporium, (800) 473-4554, fax (818) 759-2207, website: www.equipmentemporium.com.

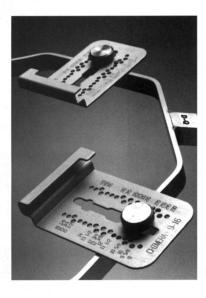
Kino Flo DMX System

Kino Flo's Image Studio series announces a number of advancements in its custom on-board DMX control system for TV and film lighting. The DMX interface technology enables simultaneous remote activation of more than 3.000 individual lamps through a dimmercontrol board. Light quality can also be controlled through the new DMX Image fixtures, which prevent Mired shift in color temperature that other systems often correct through cosmetic gels or video camera color-balancing. Kino Flo Image fixtures maintain color temperature regardless of how low the light level drops. Up to 512 DMX Image fixtures can be operated via a remote dimmer board; each channel can operate individual lamps in each fixture. If a cable is accidentally disconnected, the DMX fixture "remembers" its last programmed setting until manual shutoff. The DMX series of fixtures includes the Image 80 (eight 4' lamps), Image 40 (four 4' lamps) and Image 20 (four 2' lamps). Each comes complete with focusing lever, gel frame and a 25' power cord.

Kino Flo, (818) 767-6528, fax (818) 767-7517, website www.kinoflo.com

Chimera's Adjustable Speed Rings

Chimera announces three new Adjustable Speed Rings, which are designed to fit circular sizes ranging from 5" (129mm) to 21.5" (546mm). Available first will be the 9905, specifically set up to fit light fixtures with barn door ear sizes from 9" (230mm) to 161/8" (411mm); this ring will be compatible with both Quartz and Daylite Lightbanks. Up next is the 9900 ring, for use in the 5" to 9" range, and to be implemented with the Video Pro and Daylite Jr. banks.



Subsequently, the 9910 will fit the 161/6" to 21.5" range, and will also function with the Quartz and Daylite Lightbanks.

Chimera, (888) 444-1812, website: www.chimeralighting.com.

Anamorphic Attachment

OpTex introduces the DV Anamorphic Attachment, which is specifically intended for use with DV/DVCAM camcorders that have 4:3 aspect ratio CCDs. The attachment is an optical assembly that squeezes the image horizontally by 1.77x in order to produce the intended 16:9 aspect ratio, so no resolution is lost when using the entire CCD. This attachment is designed to supplant the electronic process, which



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achieves the 16:9 effect by scanning only the middle of the 4:3 CCD; such a procedure decreases both vertical resolution and image quality. When using the OpTex attachment, the camera's viewfinder displays a stretched image that will be presented normally on a 16:9 monitor. No further equipment is needed to compensate for the attachment during the editing process; OpTex does note, however, that the use of their device will increase the camera lens' Minimum Object Distance (MOD).

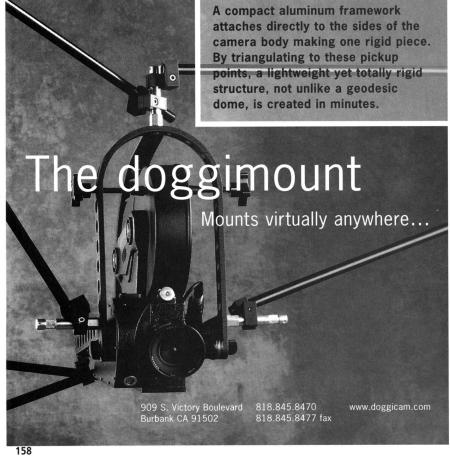
OpTex, 44 (0)181-441-2199, fax 44 (0)181-449-3646, website: www.optex int.com.



Video Assist Computer Tools

Cinelogic has introduced a new portable computer and custom software created specially for video-assist recording. The CineCorder XP is a portable video-recording computer that

can digitize two incoming video signals and store over 20 hours of material internally. Removable storage media extends the CineCorder's record time to infinity. The entire computer folds into a rugged aluminum attache case that is small enough to be operated in your







lap, but powerful enough to offer full editing capabilities. The CineCorder XP runs on AC power or 12-volt DC.

Cinelog version 3.0 offers an amazing laundry list of specialized features. Along with the ability to simulate any film speed from 2 to 800 fps forwards or reverse, automatic takelogging and a full-motion video monitor on the computer screen, version 3.0 adds support for recording two cameras simultaneously, a new "Picture Gallery" feature that allows one to manage scenes visually, a "quick-n-easy" frame accurate editor that does not need any rendering time, an externally triggerable stop-motion animation and timelapse intervalometer), plug-ins that simulate speed-ramping shots, audio VU meters, a special rehearsal mode for recording, the ability to track over 10,000 takes, SceneSearch instant take locator, re-sortable data columns. Control-L to log your backup tape counter position, and many more specialized features.

Cinelogic, (818) 772-4777; website: www.videoassist.com

New Dimming Ballast

Lowel has introduced the new portable LowelLDimmer, which is available in two models, the LD-10 and LD-20. Each has four storable, variable-light intensity levels; a storable, variable rate and intensity flicker function for special firelight effects; a 330-microsecond rise time that limits filament hum during dimming; easy



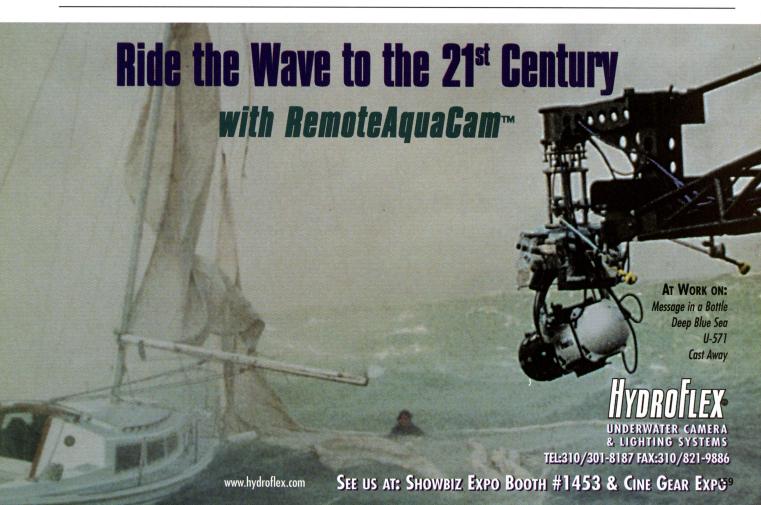
mounting to Lowel lightstand struts; and a built-in locking mechanism allowing multiple dimmers to attached. The LD-10 also offers a wireless remote option that can operate up to 8 dimmer units. The LD-20 may be used with DMX 512 lighting control protocol.

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Points East

Boom Times in Baltimore

by Eric Rudolph

Agnieszka Holland's 1997 film of Henry James' Washington Square opens with a truly remarkable shot. The camera starts high on a 19th-century city street and then glides down through a park full of people enjoying a fine summer's day. The shot travels through the park and emerges onto another street, closing in on a townhouse and then moving inside through a window, gliding along the ornate parlor and then up the stairs, before finally landing in a bedroom where a woman has just given birth.

This riveting exterior-to-interior shot, which sets a tone of period verisimilitude that bolsters the entire film, was made possible by the unique filmmaking opportunities presented in Baltimore, Maryland. One of America's oldest cities, Baltimore is often overshadowed bv higher-profile neighbors such as Washington D.C. and New York. However, this venerable city has a lively and large filmmaking community, and offers a unique variety of scenic possibilities within a small, manageable geographical area. It is particularly suited to period filmmaking, as demonstrated by Washington Square, for which an entire inner-city neighborhood was converted into a giant 19th-century movie setting.

Over the past two decades, the Baltimore area has hosted dozens of major features that have added more than \$500 million to the economy, according to the Maryland Film Office. The region is home to several professional equipment-rental facilities, as well as 450 IATSE and 3,000 SAG members. Unlike many other smaller cities, Baltimore even has a full-time soundstage facility.

Some of the many major features





shot in the Baltimore area include Sleepless in Seattle, Patriot Games, Enemy of the State, Absolute Power and In the Line of Fire.

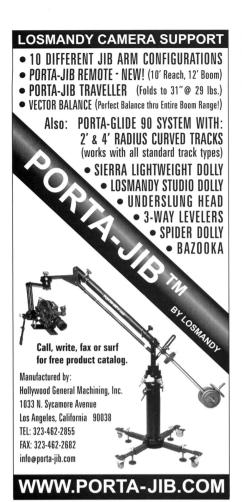
The origins of Baltimore's current film industry began with the work of two native filmmakers: the iconoclastic John Waters (*Pink Flamingos, Serial Mom*) and Academy Award-winner Barry

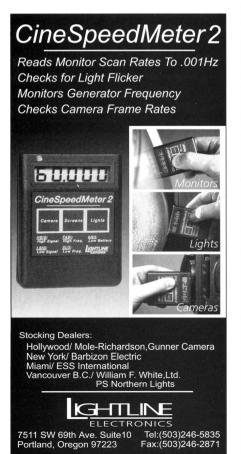
Levinson (*Diner, Avalon, Wag the Dog*). According to Michael Styer, director of the Maryland Film Office, "credit for building our film business must go to Barry and John. A lot of local people who are very active in feature filmmaking today started with one or the other. A few films were made here before Barry and John emerged, but they really got things going."

Both filmmakers continue to set and film their stories in and around Baltimore. Levinson recently wrapped the Fifties period piece *Liberty Heights*, the fourth in a series of films inspired by his early life in Baltimore. Waters has shot all of his 15 films in his hometown, and his most recent, *Pecker*, was made entirely in Baltimore — even the scenes set in New York City.

Liberty Heights was one of three major productions shot in the Baltimore area this fall, further demonstrating the town's depth of locations and reserve of seasoned filmmaking professionals.

Baltimore's vintage business district is transformed into a movie set for the filming of Barry Levinson's new film Liberty Heights.





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"We've always said that we had sufficient crew depth to support three productions at once, and this fall we proved it," says Styer proudly. "One of our recent films was Garry Marshall's Runaway Bride. They shot nearly the entire project here. Barry Levinson shot all of Liberty Heights in Baltimore, and of course we had the Levinson/NBC Studios co-production Homicide: Life on the Street shooting five days a week."

In addition to strong crews and the availability of equipment, two other keys to the success of the Maryland film scene are the area's "ability to look like almost anywhere, and our proximity to New York and Washington," Styer explains. "We offer locations that can stand in for maritime New England. such as our Chesapeake Bay area, and our flat Eastern shore works well as the midwest. We also have the Appalachian mountains to our west. In addition, there's the great urban center of Baltimore, which offers the type of elegant cityscapes seen in Washington Sauare, as well as the grittier contemporary world of Homicide. And people working here can hop on Amtrak's Metroliner and be in midtown Manhattan in about two hours."

Baltimore's proximity to New York was a factor in luring the \$65 millionplus Runaway Bride, which was originally slated to be shot mostly in New York and other Maryland towns. Styer explains, "They had a limited time period when all of the above-the-line talent was available, and couldn't find stage space in New York. Our one dedicated stage facility wasn't big enough; they needed 25,000 square feet for sets like a New York penthouse. However, we have a lot of empty warehouses and have always been able to find space on an as-needed basis. Runaway Bride shot all but two days of scenes set in Manhattan right here in Maryland."

Not only does Baltimore provide a wide variety of location types, but as a compact city it is easy for productions to move from one location to the next, which can help keep costs down. "A crew move in Baltimore typically takes

15 to 30 minutes — not an hour or more, as it can in a larger city," reports Kathi Ash, location coordinator for Levinson's *Liberty Heights*.

Additionally, much of Baltimore is characterized by a slightly old-fashioned feel, which makes it a good place to film many types of period projects. For *Liberty Heights*, which is set in 1954, Ash found that re-creating a 45-year-old period look was often a matter of simply "dressing a street with picture cars and signage; you completely buy the period setting."

Community pride and the area's preservation ethic have helped make it easy for filmmakers to re-create bygone eras. Ash says, "We have an amazing variety of old but still intact neighborhoods. Properties have been kept up and actively restored in much of Baltimore, and the restoration is often done with a good deal of sensitivity. You don't see a dropped ceiling in every row house; a lot of places have been beautifully restored, but not necessarily changed. Places that Barry Levinson remembered from his youth and wanted to use in the Liberty Heights are still here, which is wonderful."

Another plus is the abundance and expertise of local construction artisans, who work on films when not restoring properties. Styer attests, "Washington Square, was shot entirely in Maryland except for one scene. It was a \$12 million production, and not one member of the art department had to be brought in from out of town." Kathi Ash notes that many local art department personnel who worked on Washington Square have since been hired for films shot elsewhere.

Additionally noting that downtown Baltimore's venerable Redwood Street has stood in for New York and Boston in various movies, and was easily dressed for use as a Fifties-era red-light district in *Liberty Heights*, Ash concludes, "Baltimore is a market that is very welcoming, and we can easily draw an unusual and complex picture for filmmakers down here."

Books in Review

by George Turner

Hitchcock's Notebooks

by Dan Aulier Spike/Avon Books, 400 pps., hardback, \$30 ISBN 0-380-97783-4

Here it comes, right on schedule a new book about Alfred Hitchcock. This one makes the recommended list easily because it's neither the usual rehash of earlier writings nor another attempt at psychological analysis. It's loaded with fresh information culled mostly from the Hitchcock archives at the Margaret Herrick Library of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. There are letters and notes from the director to his collaborators, as well as scripts, production notes, revisions, minutes of staff meetings, letters, storyboards and other documents, often reproduced in facsimile. Backup is provided by interviews with writers, cinematographers, designers, illustrators and others intimately involved with the productions cited.

The movies that are covered in greater detail are mostly those made after the Britisher had established himself firmly in the American studios. Important entries include reproductions of Gordon McDonnell's six-page story idea and 26 pages of Thornton Wilder's handwritten screenplay for Shadow of a Doubt. There is a great deal of revealing production art such as Mentor Huebner's superb storyboards for North by Northwest, including the entire crop-duster sequence; Hitchcock's own drawings for The 39 Steps; Alfred Junge's set designs for Young and Innocent; and key drawings from Rebecca, The Birds, Lifeboat, and others. Reports on the numerous screen tests for the leading female role

in Rebecca are fascinating.

A grand bonus is an article written by Hitchcock about the making of his Anglo-German "lost" film of 1926, *The Mountain Eagle*, accompanied by a collection of recently unearthed photographs. This was the director's first completed production, and the stills are fascinating. There are also surviving fragments from some unfulfilled projects, including an earlier version of *Frenzy* (a.k.a. *Kaleidoscope*).

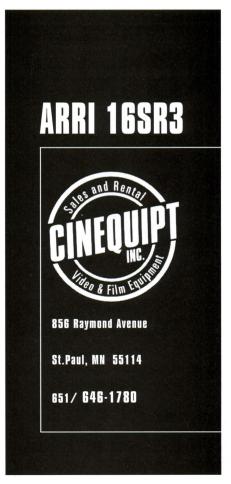
Speeding Bullet

by Jan Alan Henderson Michael Bifulco, 164 pps., paper, \$19.95 ISBN 0-961956-4-9

In terms of mystery, the bizarre death of George Reeves, the actor best remembered for his starring role in the *Superman* TV series, rivals the untimely departures of William Desmond Taylor, Paul Bern, Thelma Todd and Bob Crane. Rumors and speculation have long hovered about the case of the veteran actor, who was shot in his Benedict Canyon home early on Tuesday, June 16, 1959. He was supposedly alone in his upstairs bedroom when his fiancee and three other quests heard the fatal shot.

The cops in an old Warner Bros. picture would have called it "an openand-shut case of suicide," and a newspaper reporter (most likely played by Ricardo Cortez) would have proved them wrong. The official verdict was and is suicide, but there are so many unanswered questions that several other scenarios have made the rounds. Some seem fairly reasonable, while others smack of outright fiction. There are enough gilt-edged suspects to delight an





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Agatha Christie fan, including several Hollywood glamour gals, a top studio executive, a famed comedy actor and his wife, and a nebulous "hit man." The wide variety of insider observations about the victim and his associates evoke the multi-viewpoint plot of Bashomon

Several writers have tackled the case in magazines and an earlier book. Henderson earns high marks for placing all the known facts before the public and puncturing some of the more lurid theories that have spiced up the case. There are plenty of photos, including a chilling cover photo of a life mask of the victim emerging from darkness. The author admits up front that after years of chasing leads, conducting interviews and digging through tons of research, he still doesn't know whodunit or why. He has amassed enough truth in the matter to know as much about the case as anyone else — unless, of course, it really was murder, and the killer is still out and about

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by Anthony Slide I. B. Taurus-St. Martin's, cloth, 212 pps., \$45 ISBN 1-86064-254-3

Employed by the production companies to head off local and state censors via voluntary self-censorship, the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America was founded in 1922 with Will Hays as chief. There were few real problems until June 1934, when pressure from the Catholic Legion of Decency led the MPPDA to establish the Production Code Administration (PCA), whereupon censorship tightened to an alarming degree.

Much has been written about the effect of the Code on American production, but here a noted Anglo-American film historian tackles its effect on films from the United Kingdom that were released in the United States. Slide emphasizes that PCA administrators Joseph Breen (West Coast) and Geoffrey Shurlock (East Coast) were polite and understanding while helping to solve the

touchy aspects of the imports.

Nevertheless, some of the censorship demands seem clearly unreasonable. Hardest hit were earthy comedies such as those of George Formby and Will Hay, as well as more sophisticated romantic comedies featuring the likes of Ivor Novello, Jack Buchanan, Anna Neagle, and Merle Oberon. Low necklines, especially in historical dramas. were a constant cause of complaint. Humorous or villainous clergymen were another major target. It's hard to imagine anyone taking offense at Major Barbara. Oliver Twist or Rembrandt, but these are a few of the many pictures cited for their objectionable content.

There are the makings of an interesting corollary sequel about the censorship of American films in the UK. The PCA was tougher on sex and language than the British, who had been using mild profanity in films for years before Rhett Butler got special permission to utter his famous "damn." While the PCA was merrily chopping boudoir scenes and mild profanity out of English films, the British board was slashing violence and horror out of the Yank films with equal vigor.

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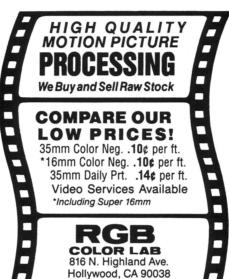
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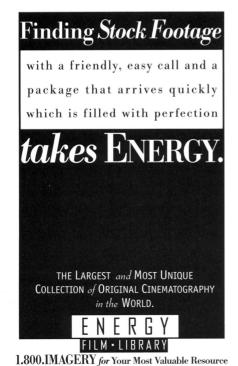








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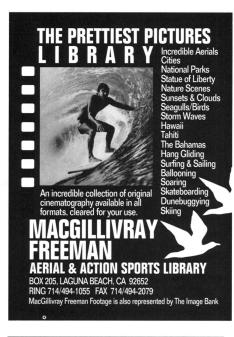
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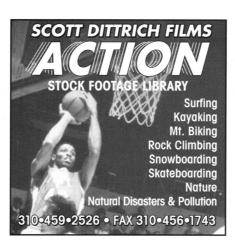


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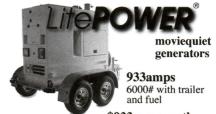


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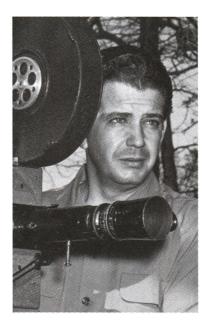
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In Memoriam



Ted Saizis, ASC, a noted specialist in location cinematography, passed away on April 13, 1999, in his home town of Birmingham, Alabama, at the age of 83.

Saizis was born on March 31, 1916. Starting young, he and his brother, Vincent Saizis, ASC, logged years of experience as freelance photographers of industrial and documentary films. At their headquarters in Birmingham they established a fully-equipped mobile unit with their own crew, cameras and accessories, including lighting equipment and generators, sound gear, dollies and cranes, grip equipment and camera cars.

Although the brothers were directors of photography and sometimes production managers for numerous theatrical features, they stated that their performance "in the difficult field of industrial and documentary films is our highest reference... Time and time again we are called upon to produce and record on film, under adverse conditions, the workings of industry." They won numerous awards in this complex field. Temperatures Made to Order, produced for General Motors, was selected to represent American Industry at the Inter-

national Industrial Film Festival.

Working on both first and second units of features, the Saizis brothers and their crews filmed extravagant action under unusual circumstances. They actually lived at the bottom of the Grand Canyon for over a month while filming the outdoor epic Brighty of Grand Canyon, starring Joseph Cotten. They shot chases and shootouts for Bonnie and Clyde on Texas backroads, and worked with stunt director Yakima Canutt on the second unit of The Flim Flam Man. Other pictures on which the Saizis brothers were employed include The Hellfighters; The Learning Tree; Gaily, Gaily; In Like Flint; The Delta Factor; Bayou; Skullduggery; Force of the Wind; Land of the Trembling Earth; Black Fury and The Secret of Nina Duprez.

One of the duo's toughest production jobs was shooting the battle sequences for John Wayne's 1968 film *The Green Berets* in Georgia. In a personal letter to William Meikeljohn, director/star Wayne wrote: "I want to tell you how happy we all are with the Saizis brothers. We find them most competent and ingenious down here in some adverse conditions. They are great for the morale of the troupe, never complaining and always alert. I really can't say enough for them. I'm sure the whole company feels the same way."

The Saizis crew contributed to numerous pilots and the *Longstreet* series for ABC-TV. A TV special they worked on, *A Christmas Memory*, was an Emmy winner. "The completely self contained operation of the photo crew makes quality location television photography possible even in the remote areas of the world," Saizis once said.

Ted Saizis is survived by his wife, Sally; his brother, Vincent; and his sister, Katherine Noto. Mass was held at Saint Peter's Catholic Church in Hoover, Alabama.

Photos courtesy of Pergo Prods

From the Clubhouse



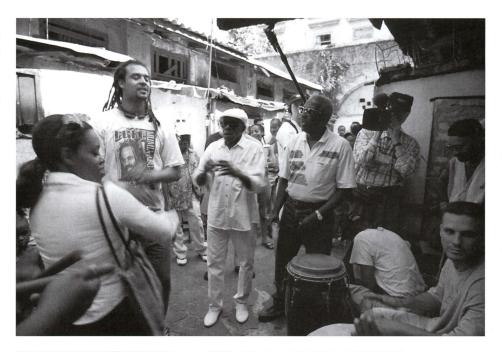
Wexler Hits Havana

Haskell Wexler, ASC recently traveled to Cuba to shoot a documentary about a group of U.S. musicians and artists holding a benefit concert in the island nation as a means of cultural exchange. The event, Music Bridges Around the World: Cuba '99, ran from March 21-29 and featured many collaborations between the visiting artists and Cuban rhythmists. The various musicians teamed up in cross-cultural pairs for an intensive five-day period of songwriting and composing, which culminated with their creations being performed in a free, public concert held in Havana. This event also featured a goodwill baseball game played by teams composed of the musicians and visiting members of the Baltimore Orioles.

In total, eight camera crews documented the activities of such diverse artists as Montell Jordan, Lisa Loeb, Peter Frampton, Burt Bacharach, Gladys Night, Me'shell Ndegeocello, Joan Osborne and Jimmy Buffet. Also on hand were former Police bandmates Stewart Copeland and Andy Summers, Spearhead's lead rapper Michael Franti, R.E.M.'s Peter Buck, and Fleetwood Mac founder Mick Fleetwood.

Director Marc Cadieux chose Wexler as cinematographer out of respect for his immense breadth of experience in the non-fiction moviemaking, "It was an honor to work with Haskell, a cinematic icon who helped to capture this historic musical exchange and the vibrant Cuban culture," Cadieux says. "I asked him to come on board because of his experience in documentaries, and because he had previously filmed the meeting between Fidel Castro and Pope John Paul II, as well as other significant events in Cuba."

Armed with a digital video camera, Wexler spent time photographing the Indigo Girls, an American folk duo, as they collaborated with santarias,





On location in Havana, Cuba, Haskell Wexler shoots digital footage of a collaboration between some local musicians and dreadlocked, San Francisco-based rap artist Michael Franti, leader of the funk band Spearhead.

African spiritual musicians. Despite the longstanding enmity between U.S. and Cuba, the cinematographer has always found our southern neighbor to be guite inviting. "I've been down there on a number of occasions, and I've found Cubans to be uniformly friendly, loving and interested — in no way at all hostile," notes Wexler. "It's befuddles me as to why the Cuban people should be singled out with embargoes that keep them from moving freely around the world and engaging in global commerce.

The Americans went down there with very open minds. Basically, they just wanted to meet the other artists and find out their needs and desires. For instance, Bonnie Raitt brought a whole bunch of guitars with her and gave them to the music school. I look at this event as a way of saying that ordinary individuals — in person-to-person and certainly artist-to-artist relations — are more civilized than the governments and their military people."

WRAP SHOT

Doris Lloyd tries to scream as the camera lurches toward her in that celebrated POV shot from The Lodger (1944).



n recent years there have been many movies and TV shows about what we now call "serial killers." Most of these take one of two viewpoints of this unpleasant yet fascinating subject. Some take a psychological approach, concentrating on the hunted killer except for occasional asides to the investigators and/or the victims. The mystery of the case becomes a matter of "why?" rather than "who?" The other most common approach is a search for the murderer through the eyes of the investigators a "police procedural" approach with brief cutaways to the culprit. Fritz Lang's great German film of 1931, M, cleverly combined three viewpoints in telling of the crimes and capture of a child murderer, intercutting the activities of the killer with those of the police and the underworld, which is equally determined to end his depredations.

This month's cover film, Summer of Sam, is different from any of these examples. It uses the "Son of Sam"

murders, in which a madman named David Berkowitz terrorized New York, as a motivating factor for a story about the effect of the killings on a group of young adults. Thus, the killer's activities firmly set the story in the atmosphere of its time and place. Interestingly, a similar idea was explored 86 years ago by the distinguished English author Marie Belloc Lowndes.

Mrs. Lowndes focused on the killer who epitomizes such real-life fiends: Jack the Ripper, who slaughtered a string of destitute women on the streets of London's East End from August 31 to November 9, 1888. His infamous moniker eclipses those of more prolific killers because his identity was never ascertained and his crimes occurred during the same era that gave us Sherlock Holmes and Mr. Hyde, in a setting that conjures images of fog, gaslights and cobblestone streets.

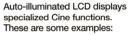
Although newspapers and chapsheets covered the killings in as much graphic detail as possible, strict Victorian moral codes assured that the sobroquet "Jack the Ripper" would not appear in fictional entertainment of the period. To circumvent this restriction, Mrs. Lowndes called her killer The Avenger, and told the story through the eyes and thoughts of Mrs. Bunting, a housewife who takes in a lodger to make ends meet. A fiscal godsend, the man is also fanatically religious, and comes and goes at all hours of night. Gradually, Mrs. Bunting begins to suspect that her lodger is The Avenger, but doesn't turn him in because she needs his rent money so badly — or is it because of her feminine instinct to protect a man in trouble?

A youthful Alfred Hitchcock made a silent movie version of this tale for British International in 1926, starring matinee idol Ivor Novello. Instead of prostitutes, the victims were showgirls. Because of Novello's popularity, the studio forced Hitchcock to ensure that he would *not* turn out to be The Avenger, but a man trailing the killer. Nevertheless, the picture made Hitchcock famous. In 1932, Maurice Elvey filmed a talkie version for Twickenham, also with Novello. This time, his demented brother proved to be The Avenger!

Jack finally got his name into pictures in Twentieth Century Fox's superb production of *The Lodger* in 1944. Directed by John Brahm, it offers some of the finest black-and-white cinematography ever created (by Lucien Ballard, ASC). Considerably glamorized, it had Jack, played by the massive Laird Cregar, killing former actresses now reduced to working the streets. He later drowns himself in the Thames after being wounded by police bullets.

One scene, much-imitated, is remembered by everyone who ever saw this version. When a street woman finds the Ripper hiding in her tiny room, the camera becomes the eyes of the killer, lurching jaggedly toward the victim until her terrified face fills the screen.

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